

# ACE

# MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC  
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

## ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

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High score table...great games...essential telephone numbers...and much more in this essential guide to the coming year.

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### ACE DECADENT ISSUE!



#### THE DAWN OF COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

to the present day: 3-part guide to 10 years of gaming starts this issue...

#### OVER 60 GAMES

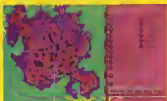
Reviewed and previewed, including *Hard Drivin'*, *It Came From The Desert*, and *Leisure Suit Larry III*.

**EXCLUSIVES!**



#### Battle of Britain

Lucasfilm reach for the skies



#### Midwinter

Mike Singleton's fractal-based Microprose masterpiece

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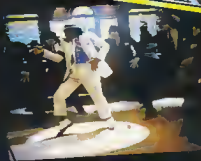
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# SPECIALS

## ACE FLASHBACK!.....31

We celebrate the end of the decade that launched home computer entertainment. This isn't just history - it's myth and legend - including such unforgettable trivia as the UK micro advertised for running a nuclear power station!

## DEATH CHAMBER.....120

A steel womb a vibrating control panel and sixteen terrified gamers locked in mortal combat. Is the Battle of Britain the end of life as we know it?



## OUT OF THE SUN.....39

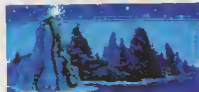
ACE checks out the Battle of Britain Simulator - more flight options than a Space Shuttle and light years beyond Biggles.

## THE BIG CHILL.....104

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## BEYOND WOROS.....126

ACE readers put their souls on screen in prose. Could you do better? Prove it...

# SPITFIRE FURY...

Not content with producing a Battle of Britain game, Lucasfilms have stormed ahead and put out a full-blooded Battle of Britain simulator. Not only can you fly dozens of British and German planes, but you can also plan your Battle of Britain strategy - see pages 39-41.

# GAMES GALORE!

ACE is overflowing with games news again...in addition to the full reviews listed below, you'll find coverage of the latest conversions on pages 123/124; our guide to over 60 top games in the Pink Pages (starting on p.137) - ideal for Christmas presents (for yourself, of course), plus three new fantasy RPG's on pp.109/110.

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ACE's resident aircraft expert reveals the principles of flight in on page 40.

# £20 OFF!

Want an ST or an Amiga for Christmas? Save £20 with an ACE

# END OF AN ERA

*It fair made us weep, guv. As the ACE Team travelled back over the last ten years for our pilgrimage through the decade, even the iron-spirited Rik Haynes was seen to shed a private tear. Farewell Eugene Evans, programmer of the immortal Whacky Waiters, now lost down the brain drain (surely some mistake – it was a terrible game) to the USA; farewell the Microdrive ("...it will have a major impact for sophisticated personal/business software..."); and where do Space Intruders intrude now (probably at number one in some far Eastern country). It's all there, in a giant three part series starting this month. However, when we actually got down to playing some of the Great Old Games, we got a bit of a shock. A few flickering sprites jerked across the screen, something beeped, and then we got ERROR IN LINE 40059. We soon dried our tears: gameplay may be what it's all about, but give us gameplay AND solid-3D state-of-the-art displays (with digitised stereo sound) any day.*

## GAMEPLAY

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The glowing games heart of Christmas features the rigours of Hard Drive, the terrors of Ghouls n Ghosts, the fists of Bruce Lee, the screams of It Came From The Desert, the lechery of Leisure Suit Larry III No Sentas – but you do get a Mickey in Moonwalker.



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Con-op futures will Block Hole be bigger than Tetris?

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## WIN! WIN! WIN!

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Yie ar keee-nugh ch-i-ow Waaaa! Grab yourself a video of Bruce Lee in action, courtesy of Mindscape.

### ACE VOUCHERS .....151

Grab your vouchers and save £20 off your Christmas upgrade present. 16-bit owners get a go next month.

## REGULARS

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ACE readers explode a few preconceptions. Join them – you could win a prize, and a reputation.

### FREE ISSUE! .....42

ACE is here, now The future is far away Bridge the gap with a subscription for Britain's most respected entertainment technology magazine – and get a free issue into the bargain.

## NEXT MONTH

### \$6000 A SECOND

Some sprites are cute; some sprites are vicious; but this man's sprites won an Oscar! ACE profiles John Leeseler, a man who can move mountains – on screen.



"Knickknack" ©1989 Polar

### WAR!

ACE carries the industry's first in-depth report into the psychology, challenge, and achievements of computer wargaming. Will the final battle be between men...or sprites?

# UPGRADE NOW!

Christmas upgrade voucher. And 16-bit owners get their own upgrade discounts on p151.

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# V O T E D ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR



# Hard Drivin'

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Hard Drivin', available for your home computer, is not just the best game on offer — it's a whole new driving experience.

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# ACE NEWS

## GAMEBOY II

Just when you thought it was safe to start saving up for an Atari colour Lynx console, news comes from the East of a new Nintendo....

**N**intendo is planning to launch a full colour version of its highly successful monochrome Gameboy, according to a number of unofficial sources. Its current monochrome Gameboy handheld system is doing a storm in Japan and USA with demand easily outstripping supply (see ACE 27).

Meanwhile Gameboy is set for a UK debut at the Earls Court Toy Fair in January – along with its rival Atari Lynx colour handheld console. Some cynics say Nintendo will wait several months before officially disclosing a colour Gameboy – thus allowing them to soak up the

profits from its phenomenally successful monochrome. As ACE went to press Nintendo was unavailable for comment.

Meanwhile, Nintendo has just won its long-going court battle with Tengen over the classic Tetris. Nintendo now has exclusive rights to this addictive game – after some confusion over what company had what rights from whom. Although this Nintendo vs Tengen court battle is over, there is still another \$100 million lawsuit between the two companies – this time over alleged patent infringement. The final judgment in this case will be in the New Year.



Nintendo GAME BOY



## STIMULATING!

A Californian entrepreneur has developed a revolutionary new like-like entertainment race-car simulator. Developed by Driver Seat, the Stimulator is an amusement park ride similar to Walt Disney's Theatre-Simulator (as featured in ACE 27). Based around a Formula One racing car, the Stimulator is a fully-enclosed motion capsule – a scaled-down version of the many civil and military flight-simulators – which can move at 25 revolutions per minute. In fact, the Stimulators are built by Environmental Technologies for training Navy Pilots. US gamblers can look forward to experiencing a Stimulator later in the year at their local shopping mall or amusement park – as for their UK counterparts we'll have to wait and see...



Walt Disney's Body Wars theatre-simulator in full swing

## SEGA FOR RENT

Virgin/Mastartronic has hit upon another great marketing scheme to promote its Sega Master console – its going to let you rent (or buy) Sega's from your local video rental shop.

Under the scheme, you can go into any RCA/Columbia outlet (there are some 1200 around the UK) and rent out a Sega console or games cartridge. Although market forces will decide the eventual asking price, a rough price guide would be £10 per weekend for the console (with a few games thrown in) and £2 per night for a game (from a selection of twenty top titles). On the subject of the Sega's rental durability, Philip Ley – Sega Brand Manager at Virgin/Mastartronic – told ACE, "we're lucky the Sega's so bullet proof".

## SHOP TILL 'YER DROP

Computer City Supercentre – the world's first computer supermarket – opened to a rapturous computer public last month in Gardnerville, California. As well as demonstrations of the latest hard and soft wares there is a software lab for testing programs. The normal assortment of box shifters are supplemented by manufacturers such as Apple, IBM and Epson. The next Supercentre will open in San Diego, and Computer City plans to open 20 US stores over the next five years. Unfortunately a UK Supercentre doesn't look very likely, but you never know.



Bros. on CD... Darling Bros. that is!

## COMPACT CODE MASTERS

Veteran budgeteers **Code Masters** has come up with a novel way to sell a games compilation... by releasing it on Compact Disk for Spectrum, C64 and CPC.

The £20 30-game compilation (including **Code Masters "classics"** like *BMX Simulator*, *Fruit Machine Simulator* and *Four Soccer Simulators*) comes on a CD and leads to connect to a CD player. **Code Masters** claims its CD will work with 99% of players, with an average load time of just 20 seconds. German software developer, **Rainbow Arts** already has a similar CD package for the C64 – though the **Arts** pack only includes six games and costs £30. Amiga, ST and PC owners will have to wait for their **CM** CD games due to "technical difficulties". Funny enough, **Code Masters** aren't calling the pack, *CD Simulator*!

## BUDDING BUDO

Electronic Arts' latest PC release is an epic martial arts game with a multitude of opponents and disciplines to master. The most startling thing about the *Budokan* is its beautiful graphics and wonderful sound: the picturesque backdrops are complemented by life-like sprites and nice little animated touches like flying birds and waterfalls. Even the sampled sound effects through the internal speaker are impressive. As with many EA PC titles, the full complement of graphics modes and sound boards are catered for. **ACE** has played an preproduction version of the game, and it not only looks and sounds good but also plays extremely well – check out next month's issue for a full review. *Budokan* costs £24.99 and should be available now – other versions may follow later in the year.

## NO SEXIST SOFTWARE

OASIS (Organisation Against Sexism in Software) recently celebrated its first anniversary. Sandra Vogel, founder of the organisation and keen ST gamesler, decided to campaign against sexist software after playing one offensive game too many. Vogel says, "I can see no reason why stereotypes of women (or men) should have to be used in computer games. One of the advantages this technology has over other games media is that you can do literally anything with a computer".

Membership to OASIS costs £3 (£5 overseas). Members receive six magazines a year, lists of recommended software and names of useful organisations. If you're interested make cheques payable to Sandra Vogel or send an SAE to: Sandra Vogel, 3 Alden Court, Stanly Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8RD.

## NEWS FROM USA

- The *Wizard* movie from Universal Pictures – starring Fred Savage from the cult *Channel Four* Sunday evening comedy *The Wonder Years* – tells the adventures of two brothers at the National Video Game Championships. It opened across America on 15th November, it should be over here during 1990.
- Taito America has bought up the rights to Indiana Jones. The *Last Crusade* from Lucasfilm Games. The game should be appearing in co-op form sometime this year. Previously Alan Games handled the co-op conversion of Lucasfilm's *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.
- ▼ **Gamesware** games are to be converted over to Nintendo NES. No title details at present, but *Defender of the Crown* is sure to be among the conversions planned.

## IN THE PIPELINE

Entertainment International is so pleased with its latest game that it's licensed the title out to leading US software company Lucasfilm and is planning co-op, console and hand-held versions. With a provisional title of *Pipe Dream*, the game was originally created by John Dale at the Assembly Line, but once Lucasfilm got involved with the project, it underwent some tweaks in the looks and playability departments. *Pipe Dream* is one of those simple, but infuriatingly addictive, arcade/puzzle games like *Tetris* or *Xor*. Expect to see it sometime in January on Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga,



Beat your heart out, Bruce Lee!

# HARD DRIVEN'

ACE INTERVIEWS THE GUYS BEHIND DOMARK'S 937-RATED RACER

Jürgen Friedrich and Mike Day are the programmers behind the ST and Spectrum versions of *Hard Drivin'* (reviewed on pages 46/47). Spectrum *Hard Drivin'* took five months to write. Day used a Talung Einsiemer as a development system until the source code got too big, he then switched to a PC 386 PDS system. The final source code comes in at 200K, including the bitmap graphics Hex data. Day spent the first month optimising the polygon handling routines – the final game runs at 5 frames per second with a "virtually unlimited" number of on-screen objects. The CPC and C64 versions use the Spectrum's program code and data tables, "converting the source code onto the C64 was difficult – the original C64 programmer opted out – but the object shape data remains the same for all versions". What this means to C64 gamers is – unfortunately – monochrome graphics, but Day offers "at least the C64 dashboard will be more colourful". Day, a 24 year-old Cambridge graduate and Record Breaker (he's going into the 1990 Edition of the Guinness Book of Records for breaking the uncycling record from Land's End to John O Groats in 14 days, 12 hours and 41 minutes – the

previous record was 19 days, 1 hour and 45 minutes), had only written one game before *Hard Drivin'* – Double Dragon on the PC. Day made the move from the PC to the Spectrum because, "the Spectrum is a simple clear cut machine to program with no complicated Operating System or graphic incompatibilities". Day believes there will be increased emphasis towards 3D games in the future. "The new powerful graphics hardware will be put to good use". His next game will either be another Spectrum con-op conversion – probably Domark/Jengen's *STUN Runner* – or a 68000 programming project developing complex 3D routines. Jürgen Friedrich, a 25 year-old West German from Düsseldorf, wrote all the 16-bit versions of *Hard Drivin'* – except the Archie version which is being written by the Indirector programmers (see review on page 84). The game took about 6 months to write and was written



Jürgen 'wall'hard Friedrich

on the ST using Turbo C and Art Director. The final source code is 350K-400K with a ratio of 70% C, 30% Assembly. The hardest part to write was the rotation code, the most difficult version was the PC, due to its lack of horsepower and differing graphics modes. The 16-bit versions maintain a frame rate of 8-10 a second, with over 150 objects on screen at the same time. Friedrich started out writing utilities for the Apple II, but he got so hooked on the Star Wars con-op that he wrote a Mac version. *Hard Drivin'* is his second game, and he will probably be writing the 16-bit versions of *STUN Runner*. Friedrich foresees a trend towards 3D graphics and more complex games with "artificial worlds where four or five players can merrily together..."



Mike Day: programmer, record breaker and part-time juggler

## Jürgen Friedrich

### TOP FIVE MOVIES

- 1 BLADE RUNNER
- 2 ALIENS
- 3 VERTIGO
- 4 NORTH BY NAW
- 5 DAW

### TOP FIVE MICROS

- 1 M&B
- 2 ALAN ST
- 3 ANGA
- 4 ARCHIMETES
- 5 PC

## Mike Day

### TOP FIVE PAST-TIMES

- 1 GRIFFIND
- 2 JUCULING
- 3 PROGRAMMING
- 4 WEIGHT TRAINING
- 5 CYCLING

### TOP FIVE GAMES

- 1 MAG PLANETS
- 2 HARD DRIVIN'
- 3 STUN RUNNER
- 4 BLASTERBOIS
- 5 STAR WARS



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# IN ARCADIA

HOMICIDAL FRENZY IN COIN-OP COUNTRY...

John Cook runs the gauntlet at the recent Associated Leisure Preview in London and discovers a promising new *Tetris* challenger...plus



## BLOCK HOLE

Konami



*Tetris* is, as you may know, now a global phenomena. On Gameboy (it's bundled with the thing) alone we are talking 5 million and counting. Counting very fast too.

Not surprisingly, that means that just about every software company in the world is trying to produce another arcade puzzle game to be the next *Tetris*.

There have been some pretty bad attempts so far - *Tartar*'s plotting probably being the worst but now Konami have come up with an idea that is the best of the bunch yet.

*Block Hole* is almost like *Tetris* in reverse, *Tetris* meets *Space Invaders*, maybe? The game is this. You control a single space ship moving left/right along the bottom of the screen, just like invaders. Likewise you fire vertically up the screen - but instead of laser fire, it's building blocks.

Down from the top of the screen comes a series of irregular shapes. Loads at once if one of these shapes reaches the bottom of the screen then you loose a life. So how do you get rid of these shapes? You have to fire bricks at them to make 'em rectangular - then they disappear. Then they start coming faster and faster. Dead simple isn't it? But it works.

There are a few other complications, but this is essentially it - and I can personally vouch that it has much of the appeal and addictiveness of its Big Brother.

As one of the most popular games on offer at the Preview, expect to see *Block Hole* littering the arcades early next year. And the collective unconscious being what it is, maybe a 'similar' home computer version soon after that!



## SPECIAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Taito

In recent years, after *Op Wolf*, Taito's greatest success has to be *Chase HQ*. This was a chase driving game where you had to imagine you were in Miami Vice, driving a flash motor, zooming after assorted mobile villains.

When you caught up with them, what did you have to do? Bash the bleeding car into them until they burst into flames and pulled over. It

was never like this in *Z Cars*.

But despite its success, I always felt that *Chase HQ* had something missing. That elusive touch that is the dream of all motorists who have ever driven in London (ave speed during rush hours, 14mph) And that is?

Simple. The ability to lean out of the car with a bazooka and blow at the other scum off

Many of the seaside arcades might seem a bit empty this time of year but, as usual, the trade is busy looking at the entrails of the odd sacred goat, throwing runes, and generally reflecting on what bought in the most money last season and what they'll have to buy to make even more next summer.

To this end, there are two major UK trade exhibitions in the Winter - the first of which was held recently in London - and very well attended too.

Arcade operators made the long trek to the Novotel in Hammersmith to see the latest hardware in action and they weren't disappointed. The big manufacturers take these shows very seriously and there were games that hadn't even been shown at the huge US AMCA show a few weeks previously.

### ORGIES OF DEATH

First the bad news. Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the arcades without sporting a fleck jacket, both SNK and Sega came out with more electronic shooting galleries.

This is made all the more depressing by Sega's effort, *Line of Fire*, being its first attempt to produce an *Op Wolf* clone - having held out for so long. Shown in prototype only, *Line of Fire* utilises Sega's well



Line of Fire

tried and tested sprite expansion technology, with well drawn scenery and human military types coming towards you at a constant rate. All you have to do is engage finger onto fire button then deactivate both conscience and frontal lobes.

Rather than limiting the player's land there can be up to two of you! ammunition. Sega have plumped for a bonus based on your percentage of hits - and overall the game seems an excellent example of its type although I am still mildly dismayed that anyone should want to pay good money to blow away fake human beings.

At least *Line of Fire* tries to remove the action a little way from reality by using



large cartoon bubbles with "Ouch" in, to denote when you get hit.

SNK, of course, had a big success with *Mechanised Attack* - a two player clone of *Op Wolf* which was, strangely, a great deal more successful than Taito's own follow-up to the mega-hit, *Operation*



**Bone Busters**

Thunderbolt. Will they repeat this with *Beast Busters*?

This can be played by up to three players simultaneously - but gone are the human-like sprites. With this one you are blowing away ghosts, goblins and things that look like they've got terminal wet rot. I'd call it a cross between *Op Wolf* and Namco's *Splat House* myself - and as such I guess, skating on my philosophically thin ice, I'd rather see people playing this obviously surreal game than something more 'realistic'.

It'll be interesting to see if these second generation shooting matches have as much success as the former breed - but you can bet they won't install either at the Red Lion in Hungerford.

#### PINBALL POWER

Two bits of good news from the Show, however. Firstly Pinball seems to be making something of a minor comeback which only goes to show that some punters have got a bit of common. In the USA the revenue split between video and pinball is around 45/55, but it's nowhere near that high in the UK - as yet. With the great tables that are being produced at the moment, however (*Black Knight 2000*, *Mandy Night Football*, *Police Force*, *Elysia*, *Bone Busters*, etc., maybe that will change over here).

Secondly, someone has come up with an arcade puzzle game that is almost as good as *Tetris* (*Block Hole* - see below). Let's hope there are lots more to come.



the road (tee, hee, gibber, gibber). *Special Criminal Investigations* - effectively *Chase HQ II* - allows you to do this and by golly it is so satisfying that I've got the psychoanalyst booked already.

Controls are almost identical to *Chase*, with the addition of fire buttons on the strut of the steering wheel. Press it and - boring - at first you just get a pea shooter of a piece to administer truth and justice with.

But if you're good - very, very good - the DA

#### Special Criminal Investigations



drops you upgraded hardware by helicopter and then the fun really starts. Kaboom!

Not the kind of thing you expect to get a great deal of intellectual stimulation from - but if they ever release an M25 scenery ROM for it you'll have to prise me off the cabinet with a crowbar.



## EXTERMINATOR Gottlieb

Gottlieb? Who are they? Well hold on a bit, Gottlieb generally makes quite good portables - the latest being a super-fast effort called *Bone Busters*. But curiously, it has now entered the video market - and in the weirdest possible way.

People like me often criticize manufacturers for lack of imagination and choosing to make safe and easy games. But there again, it's not our houses on the line if the games bomb!

I anticipate someone at Gottlieb is either going to be very rich - or homeless - in the near future, as *Exterminator* is a completely new and fresh game. As such it seemed bewildering to many operators.

The look of the thing for a start digitised backgrounds and sprites. The theme, surreal mate! You control a disembodied hand which can stamp on and fire at attack waves of household objects that come out of the screen at you.

A non-standard control system doesn't help matters much - making the game quite difficult to get into. And I'm not even sure if I like it or not. But it shows that someone can still use their imagination and is still willing to take a flyer in this business. For that at least, I strongly recommend you give it a try.



**Exterminator**



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# ACE LETTERS

**YET MORE MOANS – AND VERY UNDERSTANDABLE TOO – ABOUT THE LACK OF VFRSIONS FOR CERTAIN MACHINES, A HEART-WARMING STORY OF COMPUTER GAMING SOLIDARITY AND A SAD TALE OF A MOTHER'S GAMES OBSESSION DEPRIVING HER SON OF TIME ON THE MACHINE...**

## WHERE OH WHERE?

A few issues ago in *ACE* the Firebird game *Rainbow Islands* was reviewed. It was rated 934 and I thought it would be a great game to get for ST. Since then I have heard nothing about it. All the mail order companies I have phoned don't have it, it's not in any of my local software shops and I was surprised not to find it in you Xmas '89 runners and drivers section. Can you tell me what's happened to it?

Also, do you know if the arcade game *Prehistoric Isle* will be converted to the home computer? Is *Golden Age* being converted?

Craig Sutherland, Scone

There will be probably be an ST version of *Rainbow Islands*, but just at the moment it's anybody's guess when, or on what label, it will appear. As for the other two games you mention, we haven't heard of any conversions underway.

## MOUSE GROUSE

May I appeal to games designers, programmers and software houses to always include a facility to play from the keyboard and the mouse. Some of us out here use our computers for work and a) haven't got the room and b) don't want to have joysticks around. There are several games I would have purchased but I was deterred from buying them as they were joystick only. I can fly around and blow things up perfectly adequately on *Mirrorsoft's* *Falcon* without recourse to the joystick. So come on programmers – make sure that your products are available to the widest possible audience by including keyboard or mouse or joystick playing.

Secondly, although I have read that some software companies are abandoning the Atari ST for the Amiga, are they really so foolish as to forgo the hundreds of thousands of potential Atari ST software buyers?

**Mike Taylor, Hamburg**  
If you're interested in games it really is time you got round to buying a joystick: it makes a lot of games a whole bit easier and more enjoyable. However we take your point – programmers should, wherever possible, include mouse and keys options. As for your second point we doubt whether software houses are quite so foolish as to abandon the ST. It's a strong market for them, especially in Europe, and they aren't going to turn down the chance of making more money, are they?

## HOURS OF FUN

I must say I've had hours of fun playing with the 'Gel 12 Issues Of *ACE* Comfortably Into The Folder' game that you gave away free when I last renewed my subscription.

Unfortunately, I have to admit that it has been beaten, although I did manage 11 issues before the folder exploded, showering me and the bedroom with bits of wire, magazine articles, and other assorted debris.

Can I, through your pages, ask if anybody has beaten my record (which included last December's bumper issue)?

Malcolm Crawley. Salt-dean, Sussex

Despite a collective IQ that fails to make three figures we can reveal that members of the *ACE* team have indeed broken your record, smoothly inserting all 12 of the year's issues into one binder.

## GOD SQUAD

Dear mortal *ACE* readers, I am the Deity who plans to make sure that violent computer games stay, not only on Earth but in the whole Universe.

I believe that a computer game does not turn J.B. Good into that Terminator or anyone else for that matter. Violent games are great for letting off steam, and just for great fun.

When my followers are killed on the field of Populous I turn to Operation Wolf to do the job myself. No, I don't throw bolts of lightning at innocent humans, I don't even pick up an M-16 and turn to extreme violence – I turn on my ST!

Why must some stupid mortals go against violent games? soon I will be violent TV shows I will never understand why some mortals believe that violent games cause murders and so on, I'll bet my Godliness that it's because they never got to play a violent game.

I would like to make *ACE* the God of ALL computer magazines!

Zsolt Malota, New South Wales, Australia

Your wish is our command, from now on *ACE* is the God of all computer magazines.

## ST SALT OF THE EARTH

At 8 pm for 20 hundred hours as those naval types say I received a phone call from a fellow ST user. He had seen my plea for help in your helpline column and proceeded to provide me with the cheat code to *Psychogun* *Barababar*. In my hurry to load up I did not thank him for his long distance call. So to the Lancashire bloke who saved my hair (private joke) I'd like to say THANKS!

I'd appreciate you printing this letter as I feel it shows the good nature of ST users.

Tom Woodforde, Enstone, Oxon

Fair warns the cockles of yer heart, don't it?

## INFERNAL ENGINE

I was very interested to read your

article about the PC Engine. Our 13-year-old son has driven us mad with computer games for the last two years. So, when he read a report earlier this year in various mags about the PC Engine, he had to have one.

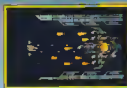
So in June of this year when for months he had saved to buy one we went along to a shop in London full of excitement we got it home and – guess what? All it did was flash and roll up the screen. The game had cost £45 so I was hopping mad we went back to the shop and it worked for them. We travelled up to London eight times, each time they changed parts and games but nothing helped. I demanded my money back, but all they would give me was a credit note. This we took, but when we went back they gave us another PC Engine as they didn't sell anything else my son wanted. Then I discovered it worked on my old black and white television – and on TVs that had vertical hold knobs. So we bought an old colour TV and,

# THE BEST OF THE BEST

## T R I A ' D



## V O L U M E • 2



**ST Amiga Format - Gold Disk Award**  
"Mentace will have you hooked for hours on end. The addictive 'just one more game' feeling hits you every time."

**ST Action**  
"This game is non addiction all the way - mix it at your peril."

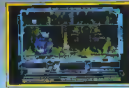
**Page 6**  
"Mentace is a superb game which is impressively presented. Mentace stands in terms of playability. It is a highly addictive game with enough variety for you to keep wanting to come back for more."



**Sinclair Chief - 10**  
"The most original and playable game in an age."

**Atari ST User - 8**  
"Tetris is one of those horribly addictive games that gets you saying 'just one more game'."

**Zzap - 84%**  
"One of the all time computer classics - it's perfectly simple and simply perfect."



**C + VG**  
"If you're after an addictive and action-packed expansion game, Babal's the one."

**Atari ST User - Star Game**  
"What a brilliant game - surely Playthings best to date!" The graphics have to be seen to be believed and the scrolling is excellent."

**ST Action**  
"A brilliant mixture of fire and fury, using strategy and all out arcade action, this game will really put you on the edge of your seat."



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Brigol, it worked

So now I read your article about PC Engines in ACE I know it was not us I think more research should have gone into this Engine before it was allowed to be sold in the United Kingdom

Mrs. P. Priestley, Croydon

It's a sad tale, Mrs. Priestley, and we can only commiserate with you. We're mystified as to why the shop wouldn't give you your money back. But at least with your old colour telly things seem to be a bit more fun now

## MEAN MUM

Way back in 1983 my sister received a Speccy 48K for Christmas. At first well for two years, then two problems arose

One was that I accidentally bought a game, Housled Hedges, which is pathetic. My mum can't last five minutes without it. And, two, the pressure pads are bust (no thanks to Daley Thompson).

So as I got sick of this I bought a C64 two years ago. The problem is, though, that we've only got one TV for the two computers, and I never get to play the C64.

So I'm asking you to do a little review on the letters pages and let my mum know how good or bad it is

Paul Evans, Wallasey, Merseyside

Come on Mrs. Evans - have a heart! It's just not fair depriving your son of his fun on the C64. Give it a whet - you might even like it yourself.

## BUG HUNTER

I have found a bug in the PC version of The Amazing Spiderman and Captain America in Dr Doom's Revenge. Any time during the game you can save your position at the comic screens by pressing B. Later on in the game when you die press Y in the Steel unit of Liberty scene. When you see the starting comic screen then press R and you should return to your saved position with full energy

Allex Young

## F-16 COMBAT LETTER

I write to express my disappointment with your recent review of Digital Integrator's F-16 Combat Pilot game on the Amiga. I dispute that the game is superior or even comparable to Interceptor, or that it is the 'best of the bunch' as you describe

Digital Integrator cannot be oblivious to the fact that a lot of serious Amiga simulation players enjoy the benefits of two disk drives. So why do they find it necessary to release an expensive 'quality' computer program which reduces the hapless purchaser to a state of constant disk swapping? The game is far from user-friendly. I am no stranger to computers but it took me a good twenty minutes to figure out the Data Disk requests, which of course go undocumented in what passes for a manual. The graphics that greet the player in the mess room are blocky and poor, the character set in which the text for messages is presented is barely legible, and the mouse pointer is flickery and jerky.

The finish of the product is nowhere near that of Interceptor. If you need reminding, load Interceptor up and compare the sound; on F-16 Combat Pilot, for the engine we hear an unidentifiable cacophony of white noise - while Interceptor boasts a full-throated engine noise and realistic weapon sound effects. On Interceptor we have responsive, intelligent controls - a quick stab on the keyboard is all that's needed for undercarriage, brakes, radar etc - and it's all very clear on the display. Combat Pilot, however, is quite a different affair. Key-presses are 'sticky' and everything makes the same 'bleep' - there is no quick lurch, no quick response, and often pressing a key produces no net effect at all and it needs to be pressed twice. This is certainly not the way a simulation should be.

The aircraft movement is also vastly inferior to Interceptor: nowhere do we have the sensation of speed, nowhere can we investigate the scenery or accurately whizz within inches of control tower or suspension bridge. And as controls go, joystick response in combat Pilot is jerky and lacks any sort of 'feel'. The scenery can only be described as crap. A few old rocks and a tawdry white building here and there to break up the monotony, and where are the 'old of cockpit' all round views on Combat Pilot as seen in Interceptor and nobler underdog Falcon? They're not - and we quickly lose another enjoyable element. Of course, it may well be very realistic, it may well be that sitting inside a real F-16 induces one to continually and needlessly swap floppy disks. It may well be true that written instructions from the aircraft are near-illegible, it may well be true that written instructions from the aircraft are not intelligible. It may be an unfortunate side-effect of lying such aeroplanes that from one's cockpit mountains all look like great pink pyramids. The silly booklet protection scheme I can live with - but then let's get this into perspective, we'd want to copy this programming the first place? It's a waste of money and I feel that is a shame that popular magazines can no longer be relied on for good advice. Next time, regardless of how highly you rate a program, I shall make damn sure that I get an 'evaluation' copy from a friend before I lay out more of my hard-earned cash.

I have been an Amiga owner for a year but an ACE reader for only one issue. If you wish to keep your readership you simply cannot continue giving ratings like 9/10 to programs so flawed and of such obviously poor quality. 9 man years it may well have

taken, but it takes me four hours to earn £25 - and that's half a day of my life. I didn't need to spend money on the game - but putting my faith in your judgement I did so and I regret it. So please in future, remember that just because a game is getting old (e.g. Interceptor) it does not mean that it isn't still the best of its kind or that you should regard it and needlessly applaud potential rivals to the rehashing degree of synchopony witnessed in the F-16 Combat Pilot review 'the aircraft's stability is quite incredible', 'Caught And', 'response and feel of the aircraft is superlative', 'Choke! And how about', an essential addition to your collection'. Well, it isn't essential to mine and has provided me with about as much enjoyment as watching the plastic plants grow at Newport Pagnell Macdonald's.

So come on chaps, consider the users out here, to prevent reviews of this sort being repeated it would probably be advisable to have more than one reviewer 'on the case', for any one program or to provide the names of the reviewers responsible for the individual reviews so that we know whose judgement may be more in line with that of the reading individual. This is the way the old Crash magazine used to work and I have not seen a better reviewing system anywhere else. And these days, with sales as high as £25-30, mistakes are costly.

Richard A. Harrison, London

ACE Reviews Editor, Laurence Scotford, replies:

Unfortunately you seem to have misread or misunderstood the review. The phrase 'the best of the bunch' was comparing the Amiga version of F-16 combat pilot with other versions of the same game. At no point in the review was there any direct comparison with any of the other products you mention.

I'm afraid that I really cannot agree with your slating of F-16 Combat Pilot. It is a program designed to appeal to simulator fans who are looking for realism, rather than general game players who would be more interested in gimmicks such as the out of cockpit views that you mention.

Regarding the problems that you had with flicky pointers and sticky keys, we experienced none of these. I would suggest that the problems may be caused by either a defective machine or defective software.

Although ACE reviewers try to be as fair and objective as possible in the way that they review games, it is impossible to ignore the fact that personal opinion and tastes will always figure in any review in any magazine. It is inevitable that occasionally a reviewer's feelings about a product will not concord with your own. In the case of this particular simulation I ought to point out that yours is the only letter of disagreement we have received. Furthermore, if you care to glance at our Stock-market feature on page 163 of the December Issue, you will see that F-16 Combat Pilot was the most highly rated program across all the entertainment magazines that month. Obviously I am not alone in my opinion of the product!

## CLEAR FOR TAKE OFF

I have just read your write-up of the Bomber flight simulator. In it, Mr. Lewis of Vektor Graphics states that 'all sims before have been either commercial Lear Jets and Cessnas or they've been fighters'. Now I'd like to know if there are any commercial jet flight simulator games around, as I'd love to take to the skies in a Boeing 757 or an Airbus 310, landing at airports like Paris and New York before getting back to Gatwick.

I know that Flight Simulator does have different scenery disks for Europe, Japan, etc., but as far as I know their flight instructions only cover Lears and Cessnas.

It would be nice if someone brought out a commercial flight sim with the same cockpit detail as Falcon or F-16 and combined it with different scenery disks. I would be grateful if you could give me any info on games about, or if any software publisher plans to produce one.

**A. Turville, Warrington, Sussex**

No, we don't know of any such games. There was an arcade machine from Taito called *Taito Airline* (the problem with this thing was that hardly anybody played it - probably because it was too boring compared to the other delights on offer. There are two main problems with the kind of game you'd like to see: there's no fighting (unless you introduce a hijacking element) and there's no great test of flying skill - smaller planes such as the Cessna needing more control than the big ones. So we think it's unlikely you'll see that game.

## ARCHIE ANGST

I occasionally buy ACE as I find your game reviews the best of any magazine. However, I own a BBC B and shortly intend to upgrade to an Acorn A3000. Unfortunately I don't share K. Pardoe's view that Archie games are receiving more coverage in ACE, if they are, it's very slow progress.

I am aware of 65 games currently available for the Archie and another 39 under development which should be ready by Christmas. How many have been seen

## VERY, VERY SAD

I was/am very very sad when I read a letter by another Dutchman (Eddy Borremans) in ACE from November saying that it's completely normal to copy games in Holland, and that computers are only bought because you can get your software for free and as such is part of our culture.

Well let me set this straight at once. Eddy should shut up and stop generalising with everything he says because he makes other people think that the whole of Holland is a bunch of software pirates who lend it quite normal to copy games. Well, it ain't true.

I have owned a C64, which included a lot of games and of course there were copies, but I can proudly say that about 75% of the top-of-range games I owned were bought (by mail in England, because it's cheaper).

Of course I understand why they copy.

1) they want to be able to brag to their friends about the amount of games they own. This shows how spoiled these RATS really are.

2) The games they copy are indeed very expensive - which is no reason to do it.

I read in his letter that he is a computer science student, who probably doesn't know anything about economics, otherwise he would have known that if the number of games sold goes up, the company can lower the price because they have to make less profit on each game to reach their goal.

It is quite unbelievable that Eddy is a student. It would be better to describe him as a man with the brains of a 12-year-old and someone who doesn't deserve to be Dutch.

**Richard van Gils, Utrecht,**

**Holland**

*Stem words - would Eddy like to reply?*

tured in ACE? Five if you're lucky.

Sure, the user base is small at the moment, but then again how many have got the PC Engine? With its speed, graphics and sound capabilities there are going to be very few consoles that can match the Archie's game-playing ability and of course it's first and foremost a powerful computer.

I look forward to the games promised by the likes of Domark and Ocean and also to the smaller names like Impact, Periscope, Clares and CIS, all of whom should be congratulated for their efforts and for taking a risk.

In the meantime how about ACE reviewing *Interdictor*, *E-Type* or *Karima*? The Archie deserves some attention and in the end it can only be good news for ST and Amiga owners too when games of the quality of *Zarch/Virus* are converted to run on their machines.

**Alex Card, Aldeburgh, Suffolk**

Take a gander at page 84 of this issue and you will find a review of *Interdictor* on the Archie - which, well, we promise, be the first of many reviews.

## ONE BIT BRAIN

Someone with a one-bit processor for a brain actually had the nerve to compare a games console with a computer (ACE 26). What's next? some girl writing to you, telling you she prefers her Barbie doll to her brother's Amiga?

I don't care if the latest consoles go up to the 16 billion colours and make your chair move along with the action. They are TOYS and a computer isn't. I'd like to see Chris Blowers design a cover for a club magazine, make an advert with a DTP program, write a letter, etc., with his Sega. Computer users can do all of that (and a lot more) and still enjoy a good game afterwards.

Someone also complained about the low ratings of Sega games. No wonder - only racing, beat 'em ups and shoot 'em ups. What about GOOD games like RPG and adventures? What about *Populous*, *Dungeon Master* and *Sim City*. In name but a few ACE rated games? Never seen one of those on a Sega. Someone mentioned *Thunderblade*? I played it once, and found it to be completely stupid and boring. Compare this with *F-16 Combat Pilot* and *Falcon* and you'll see what I mean.

Mind you, I don't look down on console players, but they have to play in their own league. It's like someone in a Lada with racing stripes who thinks he can beat a Porsche. If your only desire is playing games? Good. Buy a console. But if you want something that is a challenge every day, that is endlessly more versatile and creative and makes you brain work, buy a computer.

**Luc Stynen, Berchem, Belgium**

*Don't look down on console players? Come off it chum - you think they're the pits*



THEY'RE BACK...



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# Bloodwych



**ARGUE! BARTER!  
LIE THROUGH  
YOUR TEETH!!!**



Atari ST Screen Shots



Amiga	£24.99
Atari ST	£24.99

As the people of the Bloodwych awake to a new dawn, they find a stranger in their midst – from one of many races he has come. His task; to halt the demon that lies dormant within the Castle of the Bloodwych.

Unification of the Crystals of Sanguis will secure the Bebeemoth in his lair for all eternity. Should they remain separate, then he shall rise to bring darkness into the world.

This unique role-playing fantasy game allows greater interaction with the environment than has ever been seen before. Argue, barter, negotiate – even lie through your teeth! The fully implemented personalities of all the characters in Bloodwych allows a rich style of role-playing that has only been dreamt of.

With one or two player simultaneous mode, this is the game that you've been waiting for. Bloodwych for those that dare!

# THE ACE STOCK MARKET

HERE'S WHERE YOU CHECK OUT WHICH GAMES ARE GETTING THE HOTTEST REVIEWS IN MAGAZINES AROUND THE COUNTRY - THE HOT RELEASES YOU MUSTN'T MISS. YOU CAN ALSO PRACTISE YOUR GAMES MARKET SKILLS BY PREDICTING NEXT MONTH'S FIGURES - AND WIN GREAT PRIZES! THE ENTRY FORM IS ON PAGE 24.

**T**he ACE Stockmarket is really getting into full swing this month. You can see for the first time how the 'share prices' of the various software houses have fluctuated (see the Company Counter on the right) and, if you were one of the many readers who sent in the form for Round One, you can check out whether you're due for a prize.

If you missed Round One, here's a quick recap. The stockmarket trades over four counters. The **8-bit Counter** features the top ten games on Amstrad, Spectrum, and C64. The **16-bit Counter** features the top ten for the ST, Amiga, and PC.

In addition to the two Processor Counters there is also the **Machine Counter**. Here the top five games for each of the six most popular machines are listed.

Remember that these listings are different. They are not your typical chart entries, which rely simply on sales. Here at ACE we've always distrusted that method of charting: a game that's been hyped outrageously can always sell its way to the top, before everyone realises that it's a pile of rubbish and consigns it to the rubbish bin.

Instead, the ACE Stockmarket fixes its prices according to the **reviews ratings** each game has received in the UK Magazines. Our researchers read every magazine they can get their hands on during the month, and the games that top the ACE Charts really deserve to be there. So you can not only use the Stockmarket to win prizes, but you can also treat it as a valuable buying guide.

In order to give a fair and true overall picture of a title or company's rating, and to guard against 'rogue' reviews, ratings are statistically weighted, and titles must have more than one single review rating to be included in the Machine Counter and the Processor Counters. Similarly publishers must have more than one product to qualify in the Company Counter. This explains why some titles appear in some charts and not others.

On the page overleaf you'll also find an entry form. Check out the Stockmarket each month, get a feeling for the way the market changes as the software companies release new titles during the year, and watch out for ACE rated games, any one of which may be a contender for one of the stockmarket entries. And a really high rating could drive up the share price of the company that released it.

Then try to forecast next month's positions. There's £25 worth of software waiting for the first winner in each category to be picked at random on the closing date. Don't miss it!

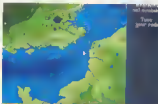
## THE COMPANY COUNTER

There's three columns of ratings for companies each month in the ACE Stock Market. The first shows the overall score for this month only, statistically calculated from hundreds of reviews in magazines during the current month. The second shows the amount of change - up or down - from the previous month. The third is the share price: the company's rating relative to its past performance. To get into the share price listing, companies need to be releasing products reviewed by magazines. To see their fortunes rise, they need to be consistently improving their product. In the short term, the 'one-hit wonder' will seem to do well, in the longer term, consistency will pay off.

Delphine's fortunes took a sharp Stock Market upturn when it followed up the teardrop-received *Castle Warrior* with *Future Wars*. But can Delphine keep up this rate of improvement? Reline's *Oil Imperium* is obviously growing on people, while The Edge's budget label *Rel* is unearthing some lost long treasures in its golden oldie catalogue.

ACE top for next month's top five: Rainbow Arts, Rock'n'Roll is one of the hot titles of the moment (see the Machine and Processor charts) and this month's review ratings should see its share price soar.

Publisher	This mth	+ or -	Rating	Beishda Shades	7.4	n/a	100*
Delphine/Pelase	88.75	+35.92	167.99	(Grand Slam)	70.87	n/a	100*
RAD (The Edge)	80	+14.33	121.82	Wickad	63.25	n/a	100*
Reline	80.25	+13.85	120.5	Dineam	50.41	n/a	100*
Gemlin	73.38	+11.76	119.12	Impressions	45.5	n/a	100*
Ganster	76.33	+8.16	111.97	Anuc	41.67	n/a	100*
Players Premier	73.25	+7.08	110.7	Midscape	79.86	0.14	99.83
System 3	80.42	+7.42	110.18	Activision	79.9	-0.19	99.74
Hayson	74.93	+6.07	109.75	Mastertronic	83	-0.2	99.88
US Gold	80.55	+6.78	109.19	Psygnosis	75.5	-0.33	99.57
				Ubisoft	78	-0.35	99.55
				Enure	80.86	-2.01	98.8
				16-Bit	76.87	-3.16	98.04
				Acti Screenshots	70.5	4	94.63
				Byte Back	85	-3.88	94.37
				Elite	65.76	-8.13	91.47
				Microprose	75.4	7.52	90.93
				Micro Style	70.38	7.81	90.01
				Firebird	54.33	-8.43	88.41
				Alternative	57	10	87.01
				Infocom	78	-13.19	85.21
				Intergames	81.1	-14.11	81.24
				Accolade	52	13.33	78.6
				Hill Squad	68.17	17.58	79.5
				Grand Slam	57.33	20.87	73.5
				Atariatic	53.25	-25.75	67.41
				PSB	53	-26.48	66.7
				CDS	47.8	27.33	33.62



Lucasfilm's US Gold *Battle of Britain Simulator* could storm the charts...

Microdiffusions	79.4	+5.48	107.41
Drayton Int'n	100	+5.3	105.6
Domark	77.77	+3.85	105.21
Virgin	68.3	+2.82	104.42
Klax	71.3	+2.67	103.89
Epyx/US Gold	82.13	+1.25	101.55
Ocean	83.48	+1.27	101.54
Image Works	83.83	+0.51	100.73
SSI/US Gold	76.5	+0.31	100.41
Electronic Arts	75.58	+0.18	100.21
NovaGen	94.13	n/a	100*
Blade	89.33	n/a	100*
Level 9	87.83	n/a	100*
Beau Jolly	86.33	n/a	100*
Origin	79.94	n/a	100*
Rainbow Arts	74.15	n/a	100*



Entries marked with an \* are new this month

## THE MACHINE COUNTER

### AMIGA RATINGS

F18 Combat Pilot	Digital Integration	97.33
Rock n Roll	Rainbow Arts	82.17
Xenon II: Megablast	Image Works	89.87
Laser Squad	Blade	89.33
Batman - the Movie	Ocean	89.27

Delphine/Palace's Future Wreny just moved out on a pleasing new it's a very high scoring month for Amiga games. F18 Combat Pilot rules the road - how on earth will Digital Integration keep up the sort of scoring?

### ATARI ST RATINGS

Damocles	Navigan	94.63
Xenon II: Megablast	Image Works	91.13
Interphase	Image Works	89.6
Paperboy	Elite	87
Games Summer Edition	US Gold	85

Two of the top five for Image Works, but Xenon II is grating well played out now - you'll see more solutions and playing tips for it than reviews - whereas Damocles is only just getting going.

### PC-COMPATIBLE RATINGS

Camel Command	Rainbird	98.25
Bombel	Activision	92.08
F18 Strike Eagle II	Microprose	87.75
M1 Tank Platoon	Microprose	87.5
Indiana Jones Adv	US Gold	84.75

It's not compulsory to make your PC games serial combat simulations, but it obviously helps. This is three in the top five for Microprose as well, now that Rainbird is under its wing, and PC Camel Command must surely be one of the most highly rated titles ever.

### SPECTRUM RATINGS

Myth	System 3	94
Unlouchables	Ocean	92.92
Operation T-bolt	Ocean	92
Batman - the Movie	Ocean	91.01
Ghouls n Ghosts	US Gold	88

All very tight at the Spectrum top five. Ocean's Batman and Unlouchables have had some reviews everywhere - see them up to make room for something else next month.

### COMMODORE 64 RATINGS

Turbo Outrun	US Gold	95
Myth	System 3	92.8
Ghouls n Ghosts	Encore	89
Power Drift	Activision	90.07
Omega	Origin	87.8

Straight in at number one, and the first reviews of Turbo Outrun are wildly enthusiastic. It will be interesting to see how the other formats score over the next couple of months (we certainly didn't like the ST version), but the consistency high rating of Ghouls n Ghosts shows that some of the titles can still hold their own with the latest products of today.

### AMSTRAD CPC RATINGS

Batman - the Movie	Ocean	91.5
Christmas Collection	Hewson	87.8
DynamiX Dux	Activision	85
Dragon Spirit	Damark	80.78
Shurco	Virgin	75

Spine here that the CPC sometimes gets the best of the 8-bit conversions. Dragon Spirit and Shurco, which were both in last month's top five as well, have had considerably better reviews on the CPC than other formats.

## THE 16-BIT COUNTER

It looks as though it was worth the wait for Damocles - the reviews are raving about it and it goes straight in at number one. Also scoring consistently over 90% is Rock n Roll - and with only a tiny fraction of the publicity of its neighbours at numbers one and three.

Damocles	Navigan (Am, ST)	94.13
Rock n Roll	Rainbow Arts (Am)	92.17
Xenon II: Megablast	Image Works (Am, ST)	89.67
Interphase	Image Works (Am, ST)	88.9
Future Wars	Delphine/Palace (Am)	88.75
Continental Circus	Virgin (Am, ST)	87.34
Stunt Car Races	Micro Style (Am, ST)	87
Batman - the Movie	Ocean (Am)	86.5
Paperboy	Elite (PC, ST)	86.25
Onslaught	Hewson (Am, ST)	86

Bubbling under: Ninja Warriors, Stormlord, Indiana Jones - the Adventure

## THE 8-BIT COUNTER

Here at ACE we were noticeably less enthusiastic than most about this month's number one. Power Drift, it will be interesting to see how it fares next month, when its Spectrum ratings should be included. And if you're looking for a completion this Christmas, there are plenty of goodies to choose from.

Power Drift	Activision (C64, CPC)	86.57
Christmas Collection	Hewson (C64, CPC, Sp)	86.67
Ghouls n Ghosts	US Gold (C64, Sp)	86.5
Operation Thunderbolt	Ocean (C64, Sp)	86.5
Tokuro Trilogy	Brazil (C64, CPC, Sp)	86.33
Ghouls n Ghosts	Encore (C64, Sp)	85.75
Enbal	Ocean (C64, Sp)	85.87
C & VG Coin Op Hits	US Gold (C64, CPC, Sp)	85.67
Stunt Car Races	Micro Style (C64)	84.78
Batman - the Movie	Ocean (C64, CPC, Sp)	84.68

Bubbling under: Tusker, Dark Force, Winnex, and DynamiX Dux

# THE ACE STOCKMARKET ENTRY FORM

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## ROUND TWO

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Closing date: 24th December 1989

My prediction for next month's top five software houses on the Company Counter is:

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My prediction for next month's top five game on the Commodore 64 is:

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My prediction for next month's top five games on the Spectrum is:

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My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amstrad CPC is:

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My prediction for next month's top five games on the Atari ST is:

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My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amiga is:

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Rules  
All entries must be received by the closing date for this round of December 24th 1989.

No employees of (NAP) or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.

Only one entry per household.

The decision of the judges is final and correspondence cannot be entered into.

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GRAPHICS AND DEFINITELY WORTH  
THE MONEY."  
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# GOLDCUT GAMES

FROM DRUG BUSTER TO SAMURAI WARRIOR US GOLD HAS A GAME FOR EVERYONE

Birmingham-based software company US Gold is preparing to blitz the games playing public with a colossal collection of games due for release between now and Spring. ACE has gone on the road to Birmingham (yes, we're *that* dedicated), taking a sneak look at the forthcoming US Gold line-up...

In the past, USG has suffered a fair amount of criticism concerning the quality of its computer games - particularly with its micro conversions of Sega's *Dal Run* for instance. Taking note of this disparagement, USG embarked upon a bold scheme involving the complete reconstruction of its management and software development structures. The result was dramatic. A newlook USG produced two of its most respected games: *Forgotten Worlds* and *Sinder*. Now USG plans to surpass these chart toppers - both in terms of commercial success and technical standards.

David Baxter, Software Development Manager at USG told ACE, "we experienced numerous problems in the past, especially in product quality and control - now we only use software developers that we know and trust."

Surprisingly, USG prefers to use software development companies instead of in-house programmes. The actual USG software development team is organised by Baxter and two other managers, with two games testers giving each game a thorough going-over. But life for these guys can be tough going, as USG has a staggering 160 games formats under development at any one time.

## THE USG SCHEDULE

As well as the prestigious Lucasfilm Games (see *Battle of Britain* and *Loom* previews on pages 133 and 100) and SSI licensed products, USG also has a myriad of coin-op conversions and original games planned. One of the first games due on the release schedule is *Ghosts 'n' Ghosts* - the follow-up to Capcom's phenomenally successful *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* coin-op. G 'n' G has been programmed by Software Creations, the guys that brought us the brilliant micro conversions of *Bubble Bobble* and *Bionic Commandos*. Take a look at page



Loom: made by Lucasfilms, designed by aa-Infocom Brian Moriarty - see overleaf.

68 to see if we think they've done as good a job with *Ghosts 'n' Ghosts*.

Another Capcom coin-op conversion, *Black Tiger*, is due out next February across all major formats. BT has been on the cards for ages - "an absolute age", quips Baxter - in fact it will be approximately 18 months late when it does finally arrive. BT is a six level, eight-way scrolling fantasy arcade adventure, with ST and Amiga versions programmed by Graham Litley (*Heroes of the Lance* and the forthcoming *Dragons of Flame*), C64 BT (from Softwork and Spectrum and CPC versions converted by Tiertex. Baxter characteristically sums up BT as "a big platform jobbie". But behind the BT development story there lies a very sad tale, for an 18 year old programmer suffered a nervous breakdown while working on one of the micro conversions. He has now swapped his disk drive for a spanner - working as a trainee mechanic for Ford. Who said programming computer games was easy?

Sega's Crackdown coin-op should be out a month later in March - with ARC Developments (*Forgotten Worlds*) handling the micro conversions. Crackdown is a simultaneous two-player 16-level sci-fi exploration

shoot'em-up featuring a slightly-overhead Gauntlet-type view. A PC version is planned for May.

Among the other coin-op licences due are Capcom's *Dynasty Wars* - a six-level simultaneous two-player hack 'n' slash arcade adventure set in feudal Japan - due sometime in the Summer, Sega's fantasy-epic *Golden Axe* and the horizontal scrolling shoot'em-up *U.N. Squadron* from Capcom. Out of these trio of games, Baxter seems most enthusiastic about *Dynasty Wars*, claiming it to be the most blood-thirsty game he can think of.

## AND THERE'S MORE...

Back in March USG decided to commission a new label solely dedicated to producing original games - mainly on 16-bit formats with console and C64 versions under consideration. The as yet unnamed label has six games due for release over the next six months with a

view for worldwide release instead of USG's more usual European-only approach. Two of the new original games, *Robotix* and *Sphercule*, are particularly impressive beasts. *Robotix* is being programmed by Binary Design

**Heavy Metal** an Access (*Landerboard*, *Beach Head*) multi-stage tank-simulation due out on Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga and PC in January.





# Player Manager

BY DINO DINI

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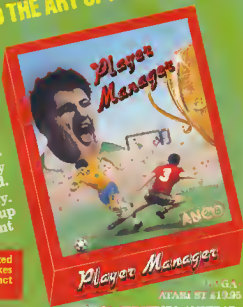
## MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Devising winning tactics, acquiring players with right skills from the Transfer market and selecting a well balanced team is the test of his Managerial skills. When to hang his boots up is the toughest decision he has to make.

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Name	Age	Position	Attributes
Position	18	Goalkeeper	99/99/99
Age	24	Defender	99/99/99
Weight	115	Defender	99/99/99
Stamina	115	Defender	99/99/99
Application	115	Defender	99/99/99
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ACE MAGAZINE • DECEMBER 89

# ACE FLASHBACK!

**B**efore 1980 if you had a computer in your house, you would have built it yourself, and you would have thought of yourself as an electronics whiz, not a computer enthusiast. If you had a microcomputer at work, you would be in a specialist, electronics/science-orientated profession, and the micro would in all likelihood be a Commodore PET. Your home computer would have taken days hunched over a hot soldering iron to assemble and you wouldn't be thinking of playing games with it. For that there were dedicated Atari consoles from the States.

And it was in the US where people were buying Apple II's in hundreds of thousands, and the new Alan 400/800 machines. While the Ataris, like their VCS predecessors, were very much games machines, the Apple II's were used for serious applications as well for games. American computer users tended to be older, with more money to spend on serious commercial software.

It is more than likely that we in the UK would have gone on to follow the American market slavishly, and rely solely on American imports, were it not for one company - Sinclair Research. The ZX80, which sold to those electronics enthusiasts and the ZX81, which brought home computing to the non-specialist, gave the UK a distinct, 'techie' flavour of its own.

By 1980, it was clear that 'off-the-peg' computers would sell into the home sooner rather than later. Already some of the burning issues of the day bore an uncanny resemblance to debates which will carry on into the nineties. For example, in August 1980, an article in *Personal Computer World* discussed three issues: a) 'does existing legislation cover electronic media'; b) 'is digitised pornography on a disk actionable'; c) 'what is the correct intellectual property to afford to [software] to protect it from bootleggers and pirates?'

By 1981, Motorola was offering its new 68000 processor as a chip for the 80s, the Z80 and 6502 were already well established, and IBM was introducing its first 8088-based PC. The chances are that your computer uses one of these and yet they are all at least nine years old. What has dramatically changed computers into the colourful, fast, sophisticated machines of today are the advances made in terms of graphic processing, of dedicated graphics and sound chips, such as the early examples in the Commodore 64 to those of the Amiga today. Faster, bigger data storage systems have led to much bigger, multi-level programs. Devices can now be made much smaller - slim-line monitors, disk drives tucked into the keyboard - machines of a size which can be accommodated easily into the home. And finally, memory chip prices have tumbled, so that all the technology that was available in theory eight or nine years ago is now affordable and mass-produced.

More evolution than revolution, really.

## 1980

### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Sinclair ZX80 - first shown to the public in February - was the first sub-£100 'computer'. Available for £79.95 in kit form and £99.95 ready-built, the ZX80 was a flat slab of white plastic. Those cooling vents along the top back are actually painted black lines - an optical illusion which was commented on in more than one press review. It had a touch-sensitive keyboard, 1K RAM, an NEC 780-1 processor, which was a 'copy' of the Z80, and built-in Sinclair Basic. Graphics? Not produced until 1981. Sound? Forget it. Software? You had to write it yourself - indeed, that was the whole idea of the ZX80.

Another kit-form computer launched this year was the Acorn Atom, for £125 as a kit and £150 ready-built. The Atom claimed to be 3-5 times faster than Apple Integer BASIC, "and it has the unique feature of including an assembler in the interpreter". But the Acorn Atom boasted graphics as well - a screen with a high resolution of 256 x 192, five graphics modes and 192 graphics characters.

Acorn suffered from production problems with the Atom, so much so that one retailer, described in *Personal Computer World* as the 'incomparable' manager of Lasky's Microdigital chain, announced to all and sundry that he would not include the Atom in his next catalogue because he was too uncertain of receiving any stock from Acorn. That manager's name was Bruce Evens; the computer industry was to hear quite a bit more from him.

Alan had no UK division in those days; instead the Atari 400/800 machines were imported by Ingersoll.

Get back! ACE storms the Tardis and heads back in time...to an age when yer average sprite came in two colours (black and white), jerked about the screen, and went 'beep beep'.



Frogger  
Interceptor Motors

### Hewson Consultants Founded: 1980

Having worked with mainframes and minis during the seventies, Andrew Hewson was an early buyer of the Sinclair ZX80. He began writing programmes and books for the machine, and advertising them in the few magazines which existed then. Andrew made his name with books of programs for the ZX80, ZX81 and later the Spectrum. First Mike Male wrote three flight sims for the ZX81 before his 1980 program: *Heartline Air Traffic Control*, and the arcade games written by Steve Turner in 1983-84: *Space Wars*, *Scorcher* (later the best-selling Atari and LotusLink), put real money in Hewson's bank. Hewson claims to be the oldest surviving independent games software publisher.

First title: "Hires and Tips for the ZX80" (book), 1980, *Pilot and Night* (the both ZX81). 1983, book written by Mike Male.  
Best ever seller: *Parashot* (all versions).

Andrew Hewson: Founder of Hewson Consultants



"The ZX80 really is a complete, powerful, full facility computer, matching or surpassing other personal computers on the market at several times the price. The ZX80 is programmed in Basic and you could use it to do quite literally anything from playing chess to running a power station..."

Source: Cambridge advertisement, March 1980

at initial prices of £395 for the 16K model 400, £695 for the 48K 800.

#### EVENTS

If you visited WH Smith's outlet in Brent Cross Shopping Centre in North London, you could witness a curious 'experiment'. Market development manager John Rowland was putting together the first 'Computer Know-how' tent. A Commodore PET borrowed from a local dealer, a few copies of Byte magazine and a small range of books, "which were actually all about calculators because we couldn't find any computer books," says John made up the display. The crush of interested customers around the stand was so great that it had to be roped off.

The success of the Brent Cross venture led John to ask Clive Sinclair in September about selling the mail-order only ZX80 in WH Smith. "Clive suggested that rather than take on the ZX80, I should wait for his

#### Where are they now?

##### Nolan Bushnell

Nolan Bushnell was the founder of Atari which he set up in 1972. However, it had diversified into games when Nolan wrote the commercial video program *Pong* back in 1972 (he himself claims his first video game was a little known number called *Computer Space*). He released 20 or so more under the Atari banner before selling the company to Warner Communications in 1976. Nolan then set up a company to design and manufacture robots from simple functional devices to *Pelicans*, a light haired toy robot. Today he also runs coin-op manufacturer Axiom and AMPES which makes a micro TV board for the Apple Macintosh. All the companies are based in California.

# 1981

#### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Commodore Vic 20 was shown publicly for the very first time at the January Consumer Electronics show in Las Vegas, and was launched in the UK in June. It wasn't the first colour computer, but it was the first to sell for under \$300, at \$299.95. The Vic 20 had 5K RAM, a full-size keyboard which was later used in the Commodore 64, and its own custom chip, VIC (Video Interface Chip). It went on sell over two million units worldwide over the next three years.

The first UK-produced Vic 20 game appeared in September. Published by Mr Micro at £16, it was entitled *Gold Rush*, and the first person to complete it would win a bag of 22 carat gold.

The Sinclair ZX80 got its first games and Clive Sinclair was reportedly 'billed pink' that program-mers had produced graphics on the computer. The program was *Space Invaders* and readers of Tim Hartnell's book *Making the Most of Your ZX80* could either type it in, or order a ready-made tape from Ken MacDonald of Solihull.

In March, the Sinclair ZX81 was announced by the newly rechristened Sinclair Research, and given an ecstatic welcome by computer enthusiasts. Still with just 1K RAM, and still with that flat touch-sensitive keyboard, it was nevertheless a great leap beyond the ZX80, and furthermore, less expensive, at £49.95 in kit form and £69.95 ready built. It had a much lower chip count, thanks to its own custom chip designed by Sinclair and built by Feranti, it had a much improved screen display, it could produce graphics, it could do floating point arithmetic - in short it was genuinely useful as a computer rather than the electronic assembly exercise which is how buyers tended to treat the ZX80.

The more the market grew, the more it became only a matter of time before the mighty conglomerate IBM launched its microcomputer. The PC may have been behind-hand compared to companies like Apple and Commodore who were forging ahead in the new industry, but its solid, unassuming specification - Intel's 8088 running at 4.77MHz, a single disk drive, 16K RAM, but all expandable - and an equally solid price of

#### Who said this - and about what? (answer at the end)

"It marks the beginning of a new wave of personal computers aimed at the home. It's well made, well packaged and would hardly look out of place alongside the family hi-fi."



"Microten 65 - the microcomputer that thinks it's a mini." Advertising slogan from Tangent Computer Systems



Alice in Videoland Audiotronic

new product, then still unnamed," he remembers. "By Christmas 1980, it was officially the ZX81, and we were wrangling over how many units we thought we could sell. We thought somewhere between 15-30,000 would be about right, and gave Clive an order for 18,000 to put in 15 branches. We ended up selling 450,000 in the two years of the ZX81's life."

The third PCW show moved to the Cunard International Hotel (now the Novotel) in September. This was the last wholly business/hobbyist PCW show, before the games began to take over.

The 'third wave' of arcade games - *Galaxians*, *Scramble*, *Defender*, *Donkey Kong* and *Pacman* - appeared as *Space Invaders* burnt itself out (the 'first wave' of *Pong*, *Pong* and *BreakOut* had taken the arcades by storm in the early to mid-70s). A year or so later, crude variants of these titles formed the raw beginnings of the games we know today.

#### PisonFounded: October 1980

Pison was set up by David Pothorpe after leaving the teaching staff of Imperial College, London. By 1981, the company was enjoying considerable success repackaging and marketing software programs for the ZX81. *Fight Simulation* was a huge early seller, followed by *Horace Goes Skiing*. However, Pothorpe's ambitions lay beyond games and other publishing titles on the Spectrum. Chartered Flagline, *Scrabble*. Pison took on the task of producing the integrated business software for Clive Sinclair's GL machines. It was a task time out to produce its consistently highly rated *Pison Chess* program in 1984.

At the same time, work began at Pison on hardware development, work which saw the light of day as the first Organiser handheld computer in 1985. Since then, Pison has concentrated almost exclusively on hardware development. The Organiser and its successor the Organiser II were bought in a variety of consumer and OEM configurations, and were followed in September 1983 by the MC Mobile Computer range. Pison is however unique as a one-line business software publisher which has successfully floated on to the USM of the Stock Exchange.

First title: *Fight Simulation*, ZX81  
First seller: *Pison Chess* (all formats)





# 1982

"We hope to produce at least two new games each month - and all our software will be original rather than versions of existing arcade games," David Williams, Infinites Software (Popular Computing Weekly January 6 1983)

\$3,000, plus the IBM name ensured plenty of corporate sales.

1981 saw the first of the truly commercial software houses, as those with fulltime staff, proper offices and advertising budgets Psion, Bug Byte and Quicksave led the way out of the back bedrooms, the last named run by Nick Lambert and John Hollis who later look on a certain Rod Cousins to look after the company finances, and indeed, run the company.

Quicksave produced the first ever Spectrum game, Space Invaders at £5.95, in 1982. Bug Byte soon-off companies such as Software Projects and Imagine went to achieve success of their own (see 1983). Eventually both Bug Byte and Quicksave went on to become labels of Grand Slam Entertainments, while Psion evolved quite differently.

## EVENTS

The ZX81 finally made it into W.H. Smith, the centre piece of a display which included books, magazines and software. The demand was so staggering that W.H. Smith had to put 500 staff on a crash course to train

them to switch it on and run a small program to demonstrate the machine to customers. This was the computer's first real entry into the high street multiples, and it gave home computing some much needed credibility as a leisure pursuit.

On September 26, the first ZX Microbar three open its doors to the public. Held at the Central Hall in Westminster it was attended by several hundred Sinclair devices. Entry was free of charge. Over in the US, Infocom launched the first Zork adventure for the Apple II.

## STORIES

Sinclair suffered its first serious setback when the ZX81 was rejected by the BBC. Initially, the BBC had selected the Newbury Electronics' NewBrain as the nucleus of its forthcoming series on computers, this machine had started life as a Sinclair Radionics project in 1978. Newbury, rather to everyone's surprise, turned the BBC down and the way was left clear for Acorn headed by ex-Sinclair employee Chris Curry, promoting the Atom Smoosser, the Proton, and Sinclair itself pushing the successor to the ZX81, to compete for the contract.

There simply isn't space here to detail all the back-slapping, foot-shooting and press speculation that accompanied the award of the BBC contract. As everyone knows, the BBC chose Acorn, and the Proton became the BBC Model A micro.

## Where are they now? John Hollis/Nick Lambert

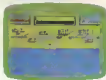
In 1984 Angus Press Software bought Quicksave, a deal which made Lambert and Hollis wealthy enough to warrant tax exile. Both moved to Guernsey where Hollis still is, with his own company Hollis Research. Hardly idle though - he wrote the ST game Precision. Nick Lambert is now back in Southampton. Co-Quick who shareholder Rod Cousins set up Electric Dreams Software in September 1985 which later became an affiliate of Activision.

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Everyone wanted to jump on to the home computer bandwagon in 1982. The Sinclair ZX Spectrum, launched in April, led the pack and heralded the beginning of games computing in the UK. Those machines that followed in its wake had nothing like the brand loyalty that Sinclair had built up from ZX81 days, and most did not noticeably improve on Sinclair's appalling disregard for production schedules.

In comparison, the Commodore 64 could have come from another planet. Its specification, which doesn't look too terrible today, was way ahead of its time, and made visitors to the Third International Commodore Computer show in June, where it was previewed, gasp in astonishment. The 64K memory really was huge at that time, its proper keyboard compared very favourably with the rubber-keyed Spectrum, it had 16 colours and no etchplate clash problem, as the Spectrum did, sprite graphics, a 40 column screen and the SID - Sound Interface Chip - built in. But to begin with, you paid for all that mighty technology: the C64 was launched at £350 at the end of 1982. And no C24 joysticks or software included, either.

In the UK the Commodore quickly joined the Spectrum as a first choice computer for buyers, without ever outselling it. In the rest of the world it was a dif-



Falcon Patrol  
Virgin Games

"We designed the Apple II with six guys and it's about to become the most-installed computer of all time. We designed the Apple II with a corporation at 1600 and it still doesn't work."  
Steve Jobs

## CDS Founded: 1982

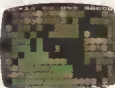
In the last British tradition, Ian Williams began by programming for the ZX81 in his back bedroom, notably a game called Castle Adventure. To get the experience on a commercial footing, he took the programs along to the local W.H. Smith where the branch manager, Giles Hunter, took such an increasing interest in Ian's CDS Micro Systems that he joined the company as sales manager in July 1983. In December 1983, CDS opened its first shop in Dorking - there are now 12 - and a few months later Giles bought Ian Williams out. CDS now employs over 100 people with interests in full-price and budget software, retailing, distribution, tape and disk duplication, packaging and printing.

First title: Castle Adventure (ZX81)

Best ever seller: Colossal Chess, closely followed by Steve's Game Smoosher (all versions)

ferent story. The C64 became the world's best-selling computer; in the US it cleaned up. Aggressive price cutting by Commodore, headed by Jack Trameil, led to a price war and near financial ruin for rival Atari. The Dragon 32, was launched in July and sold in Boots on terms similar to W.H. Smith's exclusive contract with the Spectrum. Its 32K RAM, graphics and Basic all compared favourably to Sir Clive's beast. The NewBrain, finally saw the light of day, produced by Grundy Business Systems, which had bought the project from Newbury Electronics.

The first Japanese home computer to be sold in the UK was the Sord M5, which was really a computer/console hybrid. And let's hear it for the One 1, bugs and all, rubber key board and 16K RAM. The Lynx was a Z80-based machine, with some impressively large memory configurations and high resolution graphics, which simply never made it into the high street stores in great enough number to sell. Finally, there was the curious Jupiter Ace, developed by Steven Vickers and Richard Allwaiser, who had both been on the Sinclair Spectrum design team. It was another Z80 derivative machine, which is cheekily remembered today as the only home computer to sport Fortran as its in-built language. This proved to be its downfall.



Hobbit  
Metamorphosis

"He's done it again. Uncle Clive has come up with a lovely product which will have enormous appeal to people wanting to find out more about computers but without it costing them an arm and a leg."

David Tebbutt Personal Computer World June 1981



### "Our Microdrive, when it comes out, will revolutionise mass storage thinking."

Marion Brennan, Sinclair Research  
(Popular Computing Weekly, November 18, 1982)



International Football  
Commodore 64

### Who said this - and about what?

"It will have appeal as a games machine because of its very high speed and because the language allows such sophisticated user-defined graphics."



Sinclair  
Microdrive

### Virgin/Mastertronic Virgin Games Founded: February 1983

No permanent back bedroom tales here. Virgin Games, set up by Nick Alexander, was a natural expansion for Richard Branson's 12 year old record company, and was set up in a blaze of publicity. The quality of its programs noticeably improved after Virgin set up an in-house programming team, the Gang of Five. In 1984, Virgin Games bought out Leisure Games and its range of licensed brand game conversions, and in October 1987, it acquired a slice in Mastertronic, the pioneer budget software house. The takeover was completed a year later to form a new company, Virgin/Mastertronic. The involvement with Mastertronic gave Virgin its first entry into hardware, becoming the sole distributors of the Sega games console range in the UK in November 1987.

First title: after an initial batch of eight titles which were relatively unsuccessful, Falcon Patrol was the company's first hit.

Best ever seller: Sorcery (all formats) by the Gang of Five

### Digital Integration Founded: February 1982

Gave Marshall and Rod Swift, like so many others at the time, developed their first program, Fighter Pilot, in their leisure time, transferring skills learnt at the Royal Aircraft Establishment to the ZX81. Gave now describes Fighter Pilot as "unremarkable". It was Night Gunner on the ZX81 which, with sales of over 10,000 through Wilt Smith, enabled the company to set up on a commercial basis. Both Fighter Pilot and Night Gunner were converted on to the Spectrum in 1983, and Gave and Rod gave up their jobs to go full time at DI.

First hit: Fighter Pilot, ZX81

Best ever seller: Fighter Pilot, all versions

### EVENTS

In November, Sony launched the 3.5 inch disk drive in the UK. Those of you with 1.44Mb versions may care to note that Sony's original single density drives stored 218K, the double density a 'massive' 437K. Starting price was £235.

January - and the second ZX Microfist. Bursting at the seams with arcade clones, visitors could try out and buy ZX81 titles such as Invaders and IK Break. Out from flourishing Liverpool publisher Bug Byte, Defender, Invaders, QS Scramble Asteroids and Galaxians from Quicksilver, Monkey Business from Artec, or 3D Monster Maze from J Gray Software. No prizes for guessing which of these were based on Space Invaders, Pacman, Galaxians, Scramble and Defender.



### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Plenty of new micros lined up at the starting blocks in 1983. The Acorn Electron was announced in January with a scheduled release date in March. It finally rolled out of Acorn over a year later, in May. Memotech, previously a Spectrum alternative keyboard supplier,

showed off its Z80-based micro, the Memotech MTX. Mattel announced that the age of its Aquarius would dawn in September. IBM dipped a corporate toe into the home computer market with the PC Jr, 128K RAM and a 5 1/4" disk drive for \$1269. The Coleco Adam was dubbed the 'star' of June's Consumer Electronics show in Chicago, but by Christmas, Coleco was having so many problems with shortages and reports of faulty machines, that it was glad to have the Cabbage Patch doll to fall back on.

A game called Yathalla caught everyone's imagination. Publisher Legend Software claimed it was the "first computer move", a Norse scenario peopled with 'independent' characters in which the outcome could be different every time. And at £14.95, it was a nice little earner for Legend.

In 1983, software, which had hitherto been dominated by unofficial versions of arcade games, began to diversify. Adventure games like The Hobbit, by Melbourne House, and Level 9's Colossal Adventure and Snowball had significantly improved parsers. Galtsoft's Qull became available towards the end of 1983, and

### Where are they now? Commodore Max, Ultimax and Vic 10

Actually these are all one and the same computer, branded an successors to the Vic 20 in the starter computer market. All three incarnations were announced and previewed at shows. The Ulti Max version was notable for offering a full mainstream keyboard as well as the ZX81. While the Commodore Max (the latest version) had 2K RAM and could produce 16 colours on a 320 x 200 screen, it never arrived, and was shortly superseded by prototypes of a 110 and 264, which eventually became the C16 and Plus4.

led to a thriving cottage industry of 'homemade' adventures. It was a good time for UK adventure writers, since Infocom titles, such as the famous Zork series, and adventures by Scott Adams, were not easily available in the UK, and certainly weren't converted for any home-grown machines like the Spectrum.

### EVENTS

The PCW show was again at the Barbican, and was the first of the all-screening whizz-bang games-fests that became the PCW show of the late 80s. Star turns by Imagine and Ullamsoft.

Bug Byte, one of the largest and most well-known of the software houses which had grown up around the ZX81 and Spectrum, was going through turbulent times. In January, its head programmer Eugene Evans, and senior staff David Lawson and Mark Butler broke away from the company to form Imagine Software, and its first game, Arcadia, for the Spectrum and Vic.

### Mirrorsoft Founded: November 1983/June 1985

Although Mirrorsoft was set up by Mirror Newspapers' development manager Jim Macdonald as a feasibility project in November 1983, it did not become a company in its own right until June 1985. Early hits included such educational gems as Caesar the Cat, Ford Steps with the Mr Men and Quick Thinking (early 1984). Spillies 40 was published in Spring 1984. ("I remember the date very clearly because I spent Easter Monday at the publishers, desperately trying to fix a bug in it," says Jim).

Mirrorsoft bundled going with neither big hits nor too many grand designs until it began to make a specialty of the growing 10-bit market in 1987, using its Commodore license as a springboard. The Mirror Group bought US companies FTL and Spac from Microbyte (now up for sale again) to add to its software stable, while Mirrorsoft created a new games label, Image Works.

First hit: Game Creator, 1983 (written by the then teenagers David and Richard Oatley).

Best ever seller: Falcon (all versions)

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20, became available shortly after  
ward. At first, it appeared that  
Imagine could do no wrong. Arca-  
dio sold strongly and the company  
presented a flamboyant, affluent  
lifestyle. It appointed Bruce  
Evans, that "incomparable"  
Microdigital boss from 1980, to  
head its marketing. There was  
talk of fast cars and fast  
lifestyles, and Imagine finished  
1983 on a high. In November, Bug  
Byte lost its second batch of per-  
sonnel when Alan Maton and  
Matthew Smith, programmer of the  
hit *Manc Miner*, left to form Soft-  
ware Projects, Smith with the  
*Manc Miner* sequel underway.

At the end of nearly a quarter  
of its total staff - about 1,700 peo-  
ple - after posting "disastrous"  
financial results, despite announc-  
ing a new 1200XL computer with  
64K RAM, and cutting the price of  
the 800XL from £499.95 to  
£399.99. By the end of the year,  
Warner Communications was look-  
ing for a buyer for the ailing  
games company.

Civla Sinclair, 42 years old,  
was named The Guardian Young



Boulder Dash  
First Star Software

### Who said this - and to whom?

"Are you going to sell supposed water  
to children all your life when you  
could be doing something really  
important?"

### Where are they now? Eugene Evans

Helped develop *The Bermuda Project* for Microsoft in 1987 before moving into project  
management rather than programming. Now lives and works in the US. Joined Icon Simu-  
lators in Chicago a year ago, company has produced *Days Yu Uninvited* and *Shadow-  
pass* published in UK by Microsoft.

Businessman of the Year in March.  
In June, he received a knighthood  
in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

### STORIES

In the summer, Samson Comput-  
ers changed its name to Elan Com-  
puters, and sparked off one of  
home computing's longest running  
sagas of missed release dates,  
name changes and confusion with  
the ever-entertaining tale of the  
Enterprise.

The Elan Enterprise, we were  
told would be a computer "with  
obsolescence built out". Dedicated  
chips handling graphics and sound  
(the 'Nex' and 'Dave' chips, if you  
will), large memory, expansion  
potential, the Enterprise had it all.  
on paper. When it eventually  
appeared at the end of 1984, it  
was maybe not obsolete, but cer-  
tainly nothing groundbreaking any  
more.

### Acknowledgement

Many thanks to David Tebbutt,  
and David Kelly for their help and for let-  
ting me rummage through their  
respective magazine collections.

### ANSWERS

P34 1986: Personal Computer World, May 1980, in a review of 'Tendy Instruments'  
Tendy computer.

P22 1982: Robert Adams of *Jeopardy!* about the Jupiter Ace (*Popular Comput-  
ing Weekly* November 15, 1982).

P36 1983: Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Computer, to John Sculley then of Pepsi Co.  
Dramatically confirmed as the remark which persuaded Sculley to join Apple as president.  
Sculley later married Jobs.

## SOCCER MATCH

# SOCCER MATCH

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# THEIR FINEST HOUR

ACE  
RATED  
933

## The Battle of Britain

ACE trips the flight fantastic with Lucasfilm's latest historic air combat simulation...

Summer 1940: the future of Britain lies in the hands of a few idealistic, young, but very brave RAF fighter pilots equipped with just 530 fighters up against the might of Hitler's Luftwaffe with over 2030 aircraft. Given the choice which side would you have gone for? Well, with this new Lucasfilm historic flight-simulation you have just that choice, and the chance to fly eight classic aircraft from the period. You could even alter the outcome of the Battle of Britain if you're good enough!

### FLIGHT OF FANCY

Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain is a classy product from start to finish. The PC version comes



"If the British Empire and its commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say: 'This was their finest hour!'"

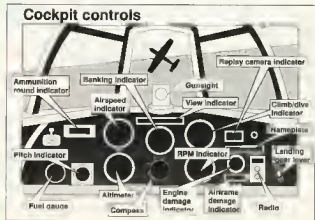
Winston Churchill, 1940

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### THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Continuing the historic theme first shown in its earlier Battlehawks 1942 air combat simulation, Lucasfilm has produced a superb flight-sim in Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain. Although the control mechanisms aren't that responsive and the PC graphics are slightly jerky, the sheer fun of playing through the numerous captivating missions and the chance to fly eight classic aircraft make this game an attractive purchase for any budding ace.

ACE RATING 933



## THE HEROES



Douglas Bader

Bader tragically lost both legs after a plane crash in 1932. However, this handicap didn't prevent him from flying again. From July 1940 to August 1941, Bader claimed 22 kills until he was shot down over France. Bader spent the rest of his war in German prison camps.



Ernst Udet

Ernst Udet was a brilliant WWI ace with 83 kills. After WWI he became a stunt pilot able to use his wing tip to punch a hole through the ground. Udet joined the Luftwaffe as a chief test pilot in 1935. After the Battle of Britain Udet's navigation rapidly deteriorated and he committed suicide on November 17th, 1941.

your missions, and review the combat film which you can "shoot" during every mission.

## PLANE SAILING

Their *Finest Hour* lets you fly eight single-seat fighters, double-seat fighters and dive bombers, and medium bombers Spitfire, Hurricane, Messerschmitt Bf109, Messerschmitt Bf110, Junkers Ju87 Stuka, Junkers Ju88, Dornier 17 Flying Pencil or Heinkel 111 Spade. Each aircraft has its own characteristics, advantages and disadvantages but the general control methods remain the same for all eight.

Easily the most powerful in-flight control feature is the review combat film option. During a mission, you can switch a camera on and record the ensuing action onto "film". You can then playback the results just like a VCR using a comprehensive variety of view modes from the ground, air or even a bomb!

## LUCASFILM'S FINEST HOUR

The ACE team are well impressed with this one — it has everything you could possibly want: authenticity, character and most importantly playability and addictiveness. Whether you're a flight sim fan or not, you can still gain a great deal of absorbing enjoyment from scrambling a Squadron, taking out a few Hun over the English Channel, while managing to return in time for four o'clock tea at Miss Higgins pie-shop. It's great in-flight entertainment. Check it out.

## THE RIGHT STUFF

After a dogfight over the English Channel, Pilot Officer Tony Woods-Sawyer was forced to crash-land his Hurricane on the Isle of Wight, knocking out his front teeth in the process. He then caught a ferry to Southampton and arrived too late to rejoin his Squadron. He made his way to a bar in a Southampton hotel, had a few drinks and spent the night. The next morning he telephoned his Squadron and told the adjutant, "If you want me to go on fighting, you'd better send someone down here to pay my bill."

## REMEMBERING THE FEW

This year sees the Battle of Britain 50th Anniversary Appeal dedicated to helping WWI RAF personnel and their families — they're a target set for collecting £20 million. If you want to get involved or make a donation contact: The RAF Benevolent Fund's Battle of Britain 50th Anniversary Appeal Limited, 51 Grosvenor Street, London W1X 9FH. Tel: 01 495 2657.

"Never was so much owed by so many to so few"  
Winston Churchill

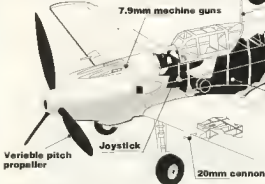
## Turning inside the enemy



When attacked, German aircraft frequently resorted to flying in a "defensive circle". If the attacking fighter could turn inside this circle he could bring his guns to bear without being in no danger of being fired upon himself.

## World War II fighter aircraft

During the 1930s a new generation of warplanes was developed, moving away from the wood and wire biplanes of the First World War and making use of flush-riveted metal stressed skin monocoque construction, retractable undercarriages and enclosed cockpits.



The aircraft everyone thinks of when talking of WWII fighters. Continually developed during the course of the war it was the only fighter which maintained its superiority for the whole duration.



## How an aerofoil works

When air flows around an aerofoil it is forced to travel faster over the top surface than the bottom. This creates an area of low pressure above the wing and low pressure below the wing. The difference in pressure sucks the wing upwards.

## The Messerschmitt Bf 109

The first prototype Bf 109 flew in May 1935 and was powered by a Rolls Royce Kestrel V engine. Although the full production version used German made engines. The 109E.3 version had a maximum speed of 348mph at 14,500ft, a wing span of 9.87m and was 8.64m in length. It was armed with two 7.9mm machine guns and two 20mm cannon.



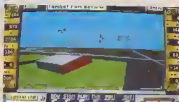
## Attack on Middle Wallop: The ACE Photo-Story

### THE LEADERS

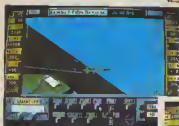


We go to intercept the Ju 88 but are instead attacked by the BF109 - which we then turn our attention to...

While taxiing our Spitfire on the Middle Wallop airfield runway we come under attack from a German Ju 88 medium bomber and BF109 fighter



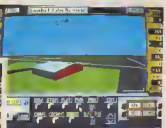
After firing a volley at us, the BF109 banks towards the sun in a classic manoeuvre



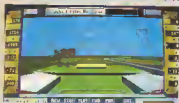
...let's get that shot from another angle!



Meanwhile, the Ju 88 makes a bombing run on the airfield...



Thankfully the Ju 88 misses its target



We catch up with the Ju 88 and let him have it!



**Hugh Dowding**  
- RAF Air Chief Marshal

Dowding, a professional serviceman since WW1 was the controversial leader of the RAF during the Battle of Britain. Despite losing the crucial Diving Battle behind the winning RAF campaign "Bluff" Dowding was the unconventional leader for the British top brass, and was subsequently relieved of command on November 28 1940 - he left the RAF two years later



**Hermann Goering**  
- Luftwaffe Reichsmarschall

Goering was a WW1 flying ace credited with 22 victories and a Blue Max medal for valor. He joined the Nazis in 1932 going on to create the Gestapo organize Hitler's stormtroopers, oversee the civil reconstruction camps and head the Luftwaffe. Goering lost Hitler's favor after losing the Battle of Britain and Russian invasion campaigns, and was eventually captured by the Allies on May 8th 1945. He later committed suicide after being sentenced to death during the Nuremberg trials

### BLACK THURSDAY

On August 15th, 1940 a group of Junkers Ju 88s from I/LG 1 used a low-level approach to attack the airfield at Middle Wallop. They arrived so unexpectedly they surprised and all but wiped out 2 British Squadrons on the ground. Only a few Spitfires of 609 Squadron managed to make it airborne while bombs were exploding behind them in the hangars. The day was named "Black Thursday".

### HUD TO HUD

Compare the Lanchester view from a Spitfire Mk I cockpit with the real thing...



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# SCREEN TEST

## PIC CURVE POWER

The PIC — Predicted Interest Curve — is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around. Here's why...

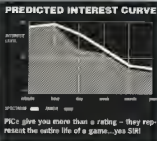
The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. But this tells you an awful lot than just what your interest level will be at any given time (although that's obviously important in itself).

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours — after all, they probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute, after which they'll go back to drinking coffee and making rude remarks about those awful hostile games that boys play these days.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot about a game too. If there's a dip here followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into — not recommended if you like to get down to something quick and easy. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard-earned cash.

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward is knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Mutant Mecha-donald Gellysburgers*... or *F15 Strike Eagle II* — just one of this month's excellent examples of today's software technology.



## DON'T FORGET THE UPDATES!

*Pictionary* hits three new formats, plus *Fiendish Freddie* and *Continental Circus* on the ST and *Psychosis*'s attractive ball-blasters on the PC. Check out p 123/4.

# THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

## PIC CURVES

This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is. Find out more in the PIC Curve Power panel on this page.

Each review also carries special Version Boxes that give you details of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These boxes include ratings for

## GRAPHICS

All aspects of a game's graphics with the limitations of each machine taken into account. A good-looking Spectrum game will therefore score higher than an average-looking Amiga one.

## AUDIO

The music and sound effects are rated here. A high rating is

possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC if the computer's shortcomings are cleverly sidestepped.

## IQ FACTOR

Yes, sometimes you have to use your brain. This rating evaluates the risk of mental effort — which some people schismally enjoy. Note that ACE reviewers are generally reckoned to be more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you suspect.

## FUN FACTOR

Basically a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkadroid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most colour-screens will tell them because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be as fun as fun and intelligent — they can be both.

## ACE RATING

This is not just plucked out of the air but is calculated from the area under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 500 does not mean we are not recommending it — the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

**900+** A classic game recommended without reservation.

**800-899** A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term death to last into the month and year categories.

**700-799** Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

**500-699** The Yes zone, where it tends to be very good if you like that sort of thing.

**500-599** This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

**400-499** Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

**300-399** Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

**200-299** Things are getting really serious now.

**100-199** Z80! games running on an Amiga.

**Under 100** Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does it would not even be worth having it for free.

## VERSION BOXES

This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

## THE TEAM

**Includes Steve Cooke**, one of the original editors of this award-winning magazine, known to thousands through his many other previous identities including *Zzap!*'s White Wizard, *The Pig*, and *Old Baldy*. **Eugene Lacey** is the man who put Britain's top-selling games magazine, *C&EG*, on the map. Luckily for us, Eugene got fed up with writing for Byers' olds and decided the time had come to tackle the challenge of ACE magazine. As one of Britain's most experienced games journalists, his word is LAW. **Laurence Scordford** is ACE's new staff writer — Laurence has been playing games since he was nappier, but some of them we probably ought not to mention. There was not competition for the ACE Staff Writer position from gamers all over the country, but Laurence popped them all at the post by show-

ing that he could not only push a game to its limit, but he could push a pen too and tell you all about it. Other reviewers include *Kath Merrisa* and *Gordon Hougham*, both of whom used to provide the reviewing talent for another magazine, but decided that ACE was worthier of their talents. Finally, **Mike Patterson** is editor of *Commodore User*, one of Britain's most prestigious Commodore magazines. What Mike doesn't know about software could be written on a 6502.

We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly — now you can too.

**TENGEN'S** *Hard Drivin'* managed to go up a gear on its numerous racing rivals in the arcades earlier this year with its realistic handling controls.

Tengen have concentrated their efforts on making the car handle like a true racing simulation – rather than lavishing stacks of code on pretty scenery and background graphics.

The visual effect of this approach is to create a game that looks very simple – basic geometric line drawings and blocky angular shaped vehicles on the road. But what *Hard Drivin'* may be considered to lack in graphics it more than makes up for in game play.

You are placed at the controls of a super fast sports car competing in a race against several other cars on a choice of two tracks.

The Stunt track features three exciting challenges; the Bridge Jump, Loop-the-Loop, and the Bank. It is also the part of the game where the main thrills and spills are to be had.

Getting the speed and approach right as you go into these stunts is the key to success – and mastering this control will take a good deal of practice.



# HARD DRIVIN'

DOMARK put the hammer down

Steering the car in *Hard Drivin'* also appears quite difficult on the first few attempts – but this is very much by comparison with other racing games that actually operate quite unrealistically under joystick control. *Hard Drivin'* is much more realistic: if you swing wildly out of control in one direction then in your attempt to right your position you are likely to swing pretty strongly in the opposite direction. Skidding also needs to be mastered if you are to become a skilled *Hard Drivin'* ace. The skidding is excellent fun and can be used to particular advantage on the Bank.

The computer helps you master the steering and acceleration with a variety of on-screen prompts. Steer wildly out of control and you may find yourself driving down the road in the wrong direction – but the computer points this out to you. Because of the delicacy of the steering a directional arrow moves slightly to the left and right. Keep this centred and you will not go too far wrong.

Another feature there to help you is the action replay sequence. This gives an out of car view of the action (as opposed to your view of the road from the drivers seat, i.e. you are viewing the whole car). Particularly exciting viewing it makes too, especially if you come off the Loop the Loop track at high speed. But it is there for more than mere entertainment – it enables you to try things out and see how the car performs.

A choice of automatic and manual controlled gears are available. The automatic gears enable you to concentrate on the stunts and the race – but once you have become fami-

Spectrum version

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lised with the controls you may decide that real men use gears.

As you squeeze the accelerator the white lines in the middle of the road soon start to disappear quickly underneath your car as it roars forward. The feeling of speed is very convincing due to the very low perspective you have of the road.





#### ST VERSION

Near perfect conversion of the Tengen original. The speed is fast, the music and skidding complete with sound effects to match. One of the very best racers now available for the ST.

GRAPHICS ■ IQ FACTOR ■  
AUDIO ■ FUN FACTOR ■  
**ACE RATING 937**

#### SPECTRUM VERSION

The main race window features a monochrome display. Despite this the graphics are very detailed and the track moves fast enough to be convincing. It is slightly jerky but this is only to be expected. Greatly to the programmers' credit, every single important game play element has been included - right down to the action replay. Once again a Spectrum conversion of an advanced concept is pulled off against the odds. First class Spectrum racing.

GRAPHICS ■ IQ FACTOR ■  
AUDIO ■ FUN FACTOR ■  
**ACE RATING 921**

The tracks are dotted with checkpoints which measure your progress against the game clock. If your speed is good enough you may get a crack at the Phantom Photon (computer controlled car) in a race around the Stunt Track.

The Phantom makes a tough adversary and accelerates away from the start at great speed. Taking him on is for the advanced Hard Drivin' - but is a challenge well worth building up to.

#### ST Version:

Action replay view of the Loop the Loop stunt. The driver lacked sufficient speed to pull it off.



#### ST version:

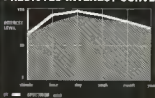
Driver's eye view of Loop the Loop. Feet down, deep breath, and close your eyes.

The appeal of *Hard Drivin'* is in the pure joy of racing along - over taking other cars, and the sensation of speed that is created in the process. The stunts are the icing on the cake, but in the end it's the racing that remains as the main attraction.

*Hard Drivin'* appears to have an addictive hook that many of the current crop of racing coin-ops lack. Domark have captured the addictive spirit of the game for home consumption. Unputdownable and certain to be the Dom Dom's biggest hit to date - possibly even pipping all the other Christmas racers to the number one slot.

● Eugene Lacey

#### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Potentially timeless entertainment as *Hard Drivin'* is likely to become the favourite racer for many gamers - and thereby get many regular spins.



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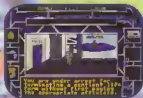
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Spectrum HoloByte™

Microscreen shot shown from PC version. All titles © Mirrosoft Limited 1989

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# BRUCE LEE LIVES!

SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS bring the muscle-bound hero of Chinese kung-fu revenge movies back from the dead – and give him artificial intelligence to boot.

**SOFTWARE** Toolworks certainly can't be accused of putting out programs that look similar however. Last time out came *Life and Death* – the game when you were trying to cure people. Now *Bruce Lee Lives!* where you are trying to kick their heads in. Naturally Bruce is the good guy, trying to defeat the assorted forces of Master Po. But I'll tell you this – it's not easy.

The martial arts bit itself is quite straight forward, with about 15 sensibly positioned moves – activated either by joystick or key board, with or without fire/shift pressed. One particularly nice bit is the fact you can program a series of those selected moves into a 'macro' – activated by a single keystroke during the combat sequences. This can be quite useful.

First it's into the training room to practice your skill on the punch bag. You'll find this vital if you are to get through the initial testing stages. No 'straight into the action' stuff here – you first have to prove your worth in the qualifying rounds. This is not a simple workout – from the very beginning the program starts to show its well concealed teeth. Because it learns.

Remember back in the old days, when you used to be able to find a series of moves that always always, always ended to take the opposition out? Bruce Lee Lives just won't stand for that sort of crap. The blurb claims that it identifies moves and sequences that you commonly use – then adapts its tactics accordingly – up

to the point of using your particularly good sequences back on you!

First off, I tried using the repeated jump kick – and was pretty successful. Ah so, methinks – this learning business is a pile of doggy. Next qualifying round, tried again. Got beaten to a pulp. Tried again – serious intensive care needed. Surely some coincidence.

A trip back to the gym quickly installed a new jump kick, low kick, jump kick sequence – then back to the qualifying. This worked a lot better immediately...until the second round. Pass the plasma please, Vicar. Take it from me, the program is smart!

Having got through the qualifying rounds, you go on to a number of missions of increasing difficulty, ending with a final confrontation with Master Po himself. You can only take on a harder mission, though, when you have com-



You're not just looking at one move here: the program lets you define macros for multiple attack tactics.

pleted the ones before it.

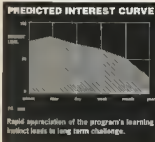
One point, your energy does replenish at a slow but constant rate while fighting – but there again, so does that of your opponent. Here I found the single glitch I could complain of – you can get into a repetitive sequence of punching each other, when very close together. Neither of you inflict damage, but your opponent will not back off if you carry on punching. He'll just punch back.

You can use this to take a breather if you are hopelessly behind in a bout and recover all your lost stamina. OK, so will your opponent, but he never goes beyond 100%, so you soon catch up.

This learning thing has to be the main challenge to the game. In all honesty, the graphics are fine, but not stunning – unlike a EA's *Bodan* to be reviewed next month – and although there is a story line to it, there is no variation in the weapon types or disciplines used.

But despite that, however, it is highly playable and will present you more of a challenge than the run of the mill beat'em-up plus it will certainly retain your interest for longer. On that premise alone, it's well worth a look.

John Cook



RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	ETBA	Early 1990
PC	\$24.95	OUT NOW
AMIGA	ETBA	Early 1990

PC VERSION		
Fast, colourful, and above all intelligent. Don't expect too much in the way of sound – but you're used to that, aren't you?		
GRAPHICS	7	IO FACTOR 6
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR 7
ACE RATING 768		

# WONDER BOY

Hack'n'slay with cutie power on the SEGA.

## III

**WONDER** Boy is back in his third incarnation, once again bringing the art of the silly sprite to the Sega. As with the other Wonder Boy titles you play the adolescent hero as he carves his way through various baddies (none of whom look in the least bit threatening), in a platform based action adventure.



Wonder Boy confronts the evil fire-breathing dragon. Even if he manages to defeat the monster all will not be well. The dragon has something nasty up its scaly sleeve.

This time you begin your adventure as per any day of the week. You know, it's the usual monster hacking routine (no sweat). But things start to go wrong when you come across the nasty old Dragon. When (and if) you manage to mortally wound him he throws a horrible curse and turns you into Lizard Man (yuk). Which only goes to prove what you suspected all along —

Dragons are really bad losers. Well, no use crying over spilt milk — you're a lizard now and you're going to have to work out how to regain your normal form. It isn't all bad news, however, you do look very cute as a Lizard (honestly, it suits you). Even so, you'll probably not want to stay that way for too long.

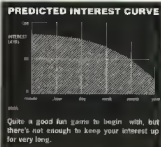
The answer lies in a magical item known as the Salamander Cross (no, not an award for heroic lizardry but the only thing that can restore you to normality (normality?). The rest of the game concerns your quest for the said

Cross, and involves the usual buzz with a whole host of colorful nasty critters.

The game is quite enjoyable to play and has some nice touches. The sprites are fun and well animated (look out especially for the way Wonder Boy himself skids to a halt when you stop). The scenery features are very good too, like the giant springs which launch Wonder Boy/Lizard Man onto higher platforms. Good arcade adventure fare for the committed.

● Laurence Stafford

RELEASE BOX		
SEGA	£27.95 cart	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR 4
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR 7
ACE RATING 675		



# GHOSTBUSTERS

The classic spook license now haunts SEGA...

**IT'S** always a rather pleasant surprise when a film tie-in turns out to be a good game. Such was the case with the original Ghostbusters game, released way back in 1984. Activision, the company responsible for the title, chose to concentrate on the more obvious action sequences from the film rather than worrying too much about a subtle plot. This approach seems to have worked well.

The game on the Sega plays much the same as it did on the original computer versions. You begin with a small amount of cash with which you can buy a basic ghostbusting



Our heroes move in, ice beams and ghost-trap at the ready, in an attempt to bag a few more ghosts. They had better get it right, though, or they'll be slimed.

vehicle and equip it with the essential pieces of equipment needed to go out and bag ghosts. Once you have kitted up, it's time to drive off and nab some nabes.

In the first section of the game proper you are presented with a map of the city. The Gatekeeper and The Master of the Key are both wandering around. If they happen to meet and make their way to Zui, then things start getting nasty. Meanwhile, you guide your ghostbusters symbol around the streets touching the ghosts before they accumulate and form Marshmallow man.

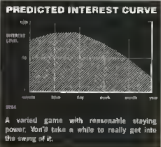
In the second section of the game in which you have an overhead view of your ghostbusting vehicle driving through the streets. You must avoid other traffic, while sucking up the passing ghosts with your ghost vacuum. Once you arrive at the infested building you enter the section of the game which actually requires some sort of skill. Here you must manoeuvre your ghostbusters with their ghost trap and ion beams to capture all of the ghosts floating in front of the building. If you fail to trap them all you will be slimed. Ugh. Your ultimate aim is to build up enough points to enter Zui before the city's PK energy gets too high. Then you can

sneak past the Marshmallow man for your final confrontation with Gorza.

The appeal of Ghostbusters really lies in the sheer variety of the gameplay, even though some of the sections are ridiculously simple. As an added attraction, the better you do, the more complex and useful the equipment you can buy. This feature is likely to keep you coming back to the game, even after you have played it several times.

● Laurence Stafford

RELEASE BOX		
SEGA	£27.95 cart	OUT NOW
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR 5
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR 6
ACE RATING 725		



# SWITCHBLADE

GREMLIN's little Cyber Knight goes forth into arcade adventure land

**THE** cyber world of Thraxx is about to enter a new era of darkness and despair. The dark lord of nightmares, Havok, having slept for 10,000 years has finally woken. The Fireblade has been broken and its sixteen pieces scattered through the underworld where Havok now reigns. The slaughter has begun, and all of the Bladeknights, hi-tech warriors of Thraxx are dead. All that is, except one. The last of the Cyberknights, Hero, is Thraxx's last hope.

Harrowing stuff isn't it? You, naturally enough, play the hero Hero (sorry about that), in this platform based arcade adventure with beat-up elements. Your task is to search the undercity for the sixteen pieces of the Fireblade. Once you have collected them all you will be ready for your final confrontation with Havok.

During your search you will have to tackle the many evil creations of Havok. To begin with you have a basic series of punches and kicks to defend yourself with. Fortunately for you, your Cyber Arm is reprogrammable. Yes folks, that means Power Ups, and lots of 'em. Rather than have a whole gamut of complicated joystick moves for each offensive movement you must use a power bar (a la R-Type) to gauge the strength and type of each punch/lock you make. This depends on the length of time that you hold down the fire button.

Make short stabs at the button and you will throw light punches. These are quick, but not very powerful, so you will have to keep pun-

neling away at your opponents for quite some time before they disappear in a puff of pixels. Hold the button down for long enough however and you will execute a perfect sweeping kick - powerful enough to dispatch most bad guys with one blow.

The actual display shows only the areas you have already explored. Any areas you have not yet entered are initially dark. This makes the whole task of exploring the complex a lot more interesting. Often areas are accessible only after you have smashed your way through a crumbling wall, so it pays to be thorough. This is especially the case with regards to power-ups and bonuses, which are frequently hidden behind crates.



If he's quick enough, Hero can grab the crystals above him for a bonus.

Graphically, Switchblade is quite nice. The sprites are not that large, but this does allow for a larger playing area. There are also some fairly tuneful ditties playing alongside the usual spot effects. Gameplay seems to be pitched just about right as well. The combat method works well, and allows you to get straight into the game without having to absorb half-a-dozen impossible controls. Well worth a look - there should be something here to satisfy most people.

© Laurence Scotland

## RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.95	OUT NOW

## MINI PIC



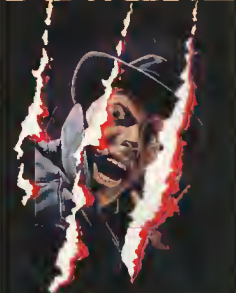
Time needed to adjust, then it's all go.

## AMIGA VERSION

Small, but cute series and a shiny soundtrack make for a fairly enjoyable romp. It's not a game that I would classify as an Amiga game - however, in that it doesn't really do anything that you couldn't do just as well on an ST. Don't let that stop you from giving it a try however. It plays well once you've got into the swing of things.

GRAPHICS 8 IS FACTOR 6  
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 7  
AGE RATING 8-8

# BEWARE



## THE HOUND OF SHADOW

The Hound of Shadow is set in London in the 1880's and is rich in the atmosphere of the era. It features 'Timelined' a new role-playing system.

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"The game's storyline is well-researched and absolutely once in a while..." ST Action

ELECTRONIC ARTS

# ONSLAUGHT

Colourful battle-lust from the berserkers at HEWSON

**WHEN** you've had one of those really hard days at work, everything that can go wrong has gone wrong, and you're just about ready to explode, there's nothing better than taking on a whole army single-handedly and having a good hack for half an hour or so. Let me tell you, it's a really good way to shift that old tension headache. Just in case you haven't got a few friends handy who are willing to be hacked about a bit, Hewson have come up with the perfect solution - Onslaught.

If, like me, you have always thought that conventional wargames were a bit dry (my apologies to all those hard core table top war enthusiasts out there), then Onslaught is the game for you. It is based around the mythical land of Gorgore. A land peopled by war-like tribes, each of whom worships one of the many gods (as neatly explained in the rather detailed manual). You play a lone warrior, also a follower of one of these gods, who sets out to conquer the entire land (ambitious eh?).

There are several phases to the game. The first presents you with a square battle map, divided into a grid with each cell representing either a kingdom, a temple, or a landscape unit. Landscape units are shown as mountains, water, and so on. You cannot cross these unless you have collected the relevant magical charm, available at certain later stages of the game. By moving the cursor over an adjacent enemy kingdom you are shown an information panel giving you the alignment, type, strength, and so on of the people who reside there. If

ed. These are set against equally brilliant background graphics and a colourful, gradient sky, which obviously involves some pretty intensive palette switching.

You begin at the far left of the battle field and must slash and hack your way through the enemy forces to reach the opposite side of the field. It's not just a case of ploughing your way through however, for if you let too many of the enemy get past you then you will lose the battle. To start with you are armed only with a mace, but as you kill your opponents they leave shields behind which can be collected to gain more powerful weaponry. Selecting weapons can prove a little tricky in the heat of battle. Fortunately, there is a tutor mode that automatically collects and selects weapons for you. The only disadvantage with this mode of play is that your score is never entered on the hi-score table.

The second stage, siega, is much like the first only you actually enter the enemy's fortifications. The third stage, mind battle, is a sub game in a completely different style. It supposedly represents the psychological battle between you and the enemy leader. This involves moving a cursor around a weird looking head with flaring arms, and firing at it, while avoiding reborn missiles, and collecting bonuses. The same section is also used if you attack a temple. Should you win this last stage, then you have successfully conquered that kingdom.

As you slowly conquer kingdoms on the battle map you will also have to contend with plague and rebellions, making it just as difficult to keep kingdoms under you as it is to gain them in the first place.

Onslaught is a superbly presented game with a lot to it. It is quite enjoyable to play, but the method of selecting weapons and the over busy on-screen action can make it difficult to keep pace with the game. This is a shame, as it flaws an otherwise excellent product. I also suspect that conquering kingdoms could become a bit monotonous after a while. Having said that, if you enjoy a bit of frantic Hack 'n' Slay, then this is definitely the game for you.



Our hero is about to be impaled by a passing charger. While he's dying there's time to admire the colourful sky. Which, incidentally, can be edited by the player

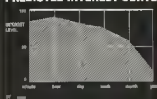


The battle map, showing the territories that make up the war-scarred land of Gorgore

you now press the fire button you can attempt to conquer them.

Conquering kingdoms is the main, meaty part of the game, and is achieved in three stages: field battles, sieges, and mind battles. The first two are quite similar and are the best parts of the whole. When you first see the graphics for these stages you are going to be absolutely gobsmacked. You are presented with a sideways scrolling view of your warrior battling, claw and tooth, with the opposing army. The sprites are absolutely first class. Incredibly detailed, and extremely well-animated.

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initial high expectations are not disappointed. I'm not convinced it has staying power though.

## RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95dk	IMMINENT

## ST VERSION

Your immediate reaction will be: That's never run neg on an ST? The graphics are incredible. For get any notion of dull 16 colour limitations on this game. The scrolling is as good as you can expect from the ST, bearing in mind that, on this machine, it's a fairly processor intensive activity. Hewson haven't let you down in the sound department either. They've obviously worked hard on getting the old prehistoric sound chips pushed to its limit. Loud, Colourful, Fast and Furious. What more can I say?

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 9  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 9

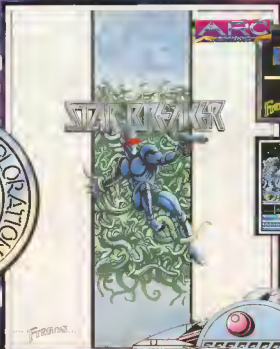
ACE RATING 850

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ATARI...THE POWER BEHIND



# ARCADE POWER



Screen shot from Star Breaker system.

## STAR BREAKER

The year is 3189. The Galactic Exploitation Federation has been sending mining crews to newly discovered planets on the periphery for thirteen years. New Chicago is one of the New City Systems of planets lifeless, except for the mining colonies, but rich in mineral and precious ore deposits. Members of the Responder Force's Guild have overrun New Chicago in the miles of underground tunnelling created by the mining colonies. The directors of the Galactic Exploitation Federation have offered a substantial bounty to anyone clearing the planet of its unwanted visitors. You and your ship *Star Breaker* change course and head for New Chicago.

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### LAST NINJA 2



Once beaten, but not destroyed, the evil Shogun Kunitoki used all his mystic powers to transport himself through time and establish a new empire of tyranning in modern day Manhattan. In fear of Kunitoki's growing powers, the arcane gods used all their wisdom to bring you, the Last Ninja, across the abyss of time and confront your arch-enemy once more. You arrive in this frightening and awesome modern world bringing nothing with you save your intelligence, skill and cunning and a burning desire for vengeance. Will this be the final battle? Can you vanquish Kunitoki once and for all?

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# FUTURE WARS

PALACE SOFTWARE import a great Gallic graphic adventure.

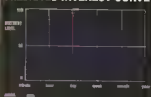
**ADVENTURES** have seen something of a revival recently—but not, perhaps, in the way that many old adventure die-hards might have hoped for. The text adventure seems to have finally found a death (at least in the sense that none of the larger commercial software houses cater for this format any more). When a company like Level 9 (having already made a concession to graphics first), packs its bags and moves on from a genre it has been renowned for, then you know that change is in the air.

There has been a noticeable move towards more complex graphics, and simpler, though more sophisticated, ways of interacting with the machine than was afforded by some of the early adventure classics. This is, perhaps, not surprising, given the widespread availability of machines like the ST and Amiga which both boast a powerful processor, large amounts of memory and easily accessed graphical front ends.

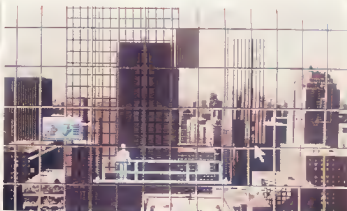
Companies like Sierra-On-Line have led the way forward with celebrated titles such as *Leisure Suit Larry*, *Police Quest*, and *Space Quest*. These are all distinguished by their heavy reliance on detailed background graphics, animated sequences, and the use of the mouse for movement and selection of many of the commonly used functions like saving and loading games. The Sierra games never completely divorced themselves from text input, however, and although they all use an extremely advanced parser, which does make things easier, you still have to make the machine understand what you want to do through typed phrases.

At first sight, this new graphic adventure from French developers Delphine Software looks quite a bit like the Sierra adventures. But the resemblance is only superficial. An immediately noticeable difference is the superior quality of both the graphics and sound effects. They are not just good, they're first class. Much the same goes for the animated sequences which occur at particular points throughout the game. Attention to detail, especially in the presentation, is found throughout.

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It will take a while to get into the game, but you won't be disappointed. Shouldn't take too long to solve though.



Impressive isn't it? This is just the opening location, and there's plenty more where that came from.

For example, rather than captions, text boxes, and menus blocking out huge areas of the screen, they are presented as white text on a translucent grey background, à la Channel 4. This way, you can still see the graphics beneath them.

Movement is achieved by moving the pointer to your planned destination and clicking the mouse button. The hero, an office window cleaner, then attempts to walk towards the spot you have indicated. When you come to give him other instructions you discover the beauty and economy of the Cinematique system that has been used to create the game—no text entry!

By clicking the left mouse button you call up a menu of standard adventure commands: EXAMINE, TAKE, INVENTORY, USE, OPERATE, and SPEAK. Once you have selected the option

you require, you move the pointer to the person or object you wish to apply the command to. For instance—if, in a standard text adventure, you would type 'OPEN BLUE DOOR' with Cinematique you would select OPERATE, then move the pointer over the blue door and click.

There are several advantages to this system. Firstly there is no hiding about trying to find just the right word to use, secondly, unless you're a touch tylist, this method is much quicker. Another benefit that is probably not immediately apparent is that there are a limited number of combinations of commands and objects/people, so even if you cannot solve a problem logically, you can probably do it eventually through trial and error. It can see puns turning the page in disgust! This does mean that this adventure is likely to prove a lot less frustrating than most, especially for novice adventurers.

The actual plot concerns the thwarting of alien plans to disrupt history making their conquest of Earth in the 43rd Century inevitable. You have been unwittingly drawn into this rather messy state of affairs. You find yourself being dragged through several time zones in an attempt to put a stop to the diabolical machinations of the aliens. This provides plenty of opportunity for varied graphical locations and problems, that should be enough to keep most people happy for some time.

Although I can see that *Future Wars* might not appeal to adventure purists, it does succeed in making the genre accessible to a lot more people. It is certainly an enjoyable, well-presented product with a lot of depth, and I wholeheartedly recommend it if you fancy an adventure that is a little different.

● Laurence Sootford

## RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£TBA	EARLY 1990

## AMIGA VERSION

In *Future Wars* there is none of the shoddy art work you may have to come to expect from adventures in the past. Instead you are treated to superb graphics, stunning sound, and detailed animation. The Cinematique system makes good use of the Amiga's mouse and graphical capabilities. A stunning product.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 910

# BATTLE SQUADRON

All this and Hybris Two  
from ELECTRONIC ZOO.

**IF** there's one word that sends Amiga-owning shoot 'em up freaks into an apopleptic seizure, it's *Hybris*. Released near the beginning of last year, Discovery Software's US imported blaster did for the Amiga shoot 'em up what F/A18 Interceptor had done for the Amiga flight sim – mainly because at the time there were no decent quality blasts about, apart perhaps from *Sidewinder* and *Xenon*.

Such was the critical success of *Hybris*, a follow-up was inevitable – and here it is. It's not an official sequel – there's no *Hybris* II subtitle or anything like that. But it's by Martin Pedersen and Törben Larsen, the team behind the original, and after one look at the game there's no denying the similarities. In practical terms, *Battle Squadron* is really *Hybris* 1990 – a 12" remix of the original, with Martin and Törben taking the original formula and giving the graphics, sound and gameplay an elaborate overhaul.

The most notable new inclusion is the simultaneous two-player option that seems sadly lacking in many shoot 'em up these days. Fight the good fight together with your mate to make the task that much easier – and enjoyable. There's a level of healthy competition produced as a result – you're a team when it comes to killing the alien peril, but as soon as a weapon capsule is released, it's every man for himself.

And talking of extra weapons. There are 25 in total. Remember in *Hybris*, how the weapon was upgraded through a series of stages? Well that's how it works here, but there are four separate and upgradable base

weapons, each represented by a different colour capsule. There's not too much difference in style or performance, and it all comes down to personal taste which is the best weapon, but check out the Magma Waves for some wholesale destruction! And of course there's a complement of smart bombs for when the going gets tough.

Each level is broken down into two halves – the first takes place above the planet surface, where the aliens thankfully aren't too nasty, while the remainder is fought out underground, in the planet's subterranean caverns. This is where things get sticky as the huge stationary aliens that were such a pain in *Hybris* make a comeback – but this time they're bigger and beefier. Look out for the gargantuan *Venus Flytraps*!

Of course the end-of-level buddies are back, but they're badder and more vicious than ever. This time around it's not just a matter of pumping them full of lead – most of them have to be taken apart piece by piece in the correct order.

As sequels go, *Battle Squadron* does the job – the programmers could have copped out and done a few measly extra levels, but the complete facelift that's been done here means you've got a whole new shoot 'em up that still manages to retain the winning feel of the original. It's tough – at least as tough as *Xenon* – and a moderator screen provided that allows you to ss around with numbers of lives, alien speed, extra weapons and so on to give you a head start.

Aesthetically it's a winner – a real improvement over the original with bigger, badder nasties and – something which *Hybris* lacked – proper varied landscapes. Check out the mechanical level for some jaw-dropping effects!



Scorching action from the programmers of *Hybris*.

All in all, *Battle Squadron* must go into the top three Amiga shoot 'em ups, along with *Xenon* II and *Sidewinder* – not to be missed.

● Gary White

## RELEASE BOX

AMIGA £24.95ch OUT NOW

No other versions planned.

## AMIGA VERSION

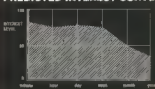
An excellent soundtrack comprising a plethora of themes and jingles does the business, and graphically there's little to touch it. It's the little touches like the slight left-to-right scrolling that give this the edge. The only quibble is that there's not much feeling of depth to the backdrops – perhaps some parallax scrolling would have helped? Game play-wise however, it's TopHole, Numero Uno, The Bug Cheese, Jolly Good Show.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 2

AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 867

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



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# THE THIRD COURIER

**B**erlin sounds like an exciting place these days. A quick visit with a hammer to chip a block off the Iron Curtain for posterity, a few free beers from emotional innkeepers, flowers from ecstatic passers-by, in fact just the place for a holiday if you fancy seeing history unfold before your eyes.

On a rather different level, Berlin is also the scene of Accolade's latest offering. It's a strange experience to wander up and down the Kud'amm in the game while simultaneously watching a TV program featuring hordes of tired and emotional Germans bumbling down the same street. With such strong competition from current events, can the game hold its own?

TTC takes place in the old Berlin and the Wall is most definitely in place. The program gives you the opportunity to create a number of Agent files, each of which effectively defines a player character who may then be 'activated' to enter the scenario. Your objective is to recover stolen NATO defence plans before they can be sold to the Russians by an apparently defecting Western agent.

Each time you play you can select any one of your filed agents and 'activate' him for her. Relevant characteristics include the standard RPG-style attributes, but these have a rather subtle effect on the action during the game. What's most important is your ability for other-people to handle a gun and your current potential for healthy living, both of which determine how long you're likely to survive constant attacks by penhandlers, muggers, drunks, and assassins.

You start the game in your apartment. The display shows your current location; there are three categories of location display rather as in The Bard's Tale series. Interiors of shops and apartments are revealed as single flip-screen rooms. Extensors scroll towards you with a perspective view each time you move, and there are also the equivalent of 'dungeons'—sparsely detailed perspective interiors that scroll in a similar fashion.

**As the Iron Curtain is swept aside, ACCOLADE plunges you back into the Cold War. NATO plans are missing, and it's up to you to create an RPG-style character and get after them...**

Encounters involve the relevant assassin or colleague appearing as a detailed figure superimposed on the current location graphic. A description of the encounter is flashed up, and if things turn nasty you'll be keeping a close eye on your character attributes on the right of the screen. It doesn't take many shots from a policeman's NATO rifle to get the health down to zero.

Commands are all menu-driven but the design of the menus can mean some rather tedious multiple selections for frequently needed options. For example, controlled by a policeman demanding your papers, you have to ACTION, USE, US PASSPORT every time. Adding in an ENCOUNTER menu could cut this and other hassle factors down considerably.

This may seem like a small problem, but it's compounded by the game's most serious design flaw: over-frequent and uninteresting encounters. While you explore the city, you're constantly challenged by police who only want to see your papers. In the end it becomes so tiresome that it becomes a real disincentive to further movement. Other



An Interior Dungeon-style—this is a hotel.

encounters are just as dull and after being told to get lost by the nth identical looking barmen in the nth identical looking bar, you're looking up at the shelf for something else to play.

Your search for the NATO plans involves similar repetitive gameplay as you question everyone you meet (almost always with identical, uninteresting consequences) and explore all possible locations, most of which look exactly the same. Back in your apartment your computer occasionally drops heavy hints in the form of e-mail from your superiors. After solving the first puzzle (with a sense of relief rather than achievement) I returned to the house to find that the solution was practically handed to me on a plate by my boss.

As you move along the street, different categories of establishment are flagged by icons at the bottom of the screen: a bar to your left, for example, or a hotel to your right. Unfortunately all bars look the same from the outside (as do all other building categories) so you have to visit each and every one in your quest. This soon becomes rather tedious since the rewards are not numerous enough to compensate for the disappointments.

Things do hot up later on as you get further into the case, but it is a tremendous struggle against the impulse to reset the machine to get this far.

The Third Courier is a disappointment. A slick user interface conceals what is, essentially, a very simple game mechanic which lacks variation in gameplay and ultimately fails to raise the adrenalin levels. Great body, shame about the brain.

● See p 143 for release details



A policeman confronts you in the street near your apartment. All encounters take this format: a graphic figure, and limited interaction. If you kill someone, you can usually take their weapon.



**LANDSCAPE** ..... 60  
Attractive graphics, marred by lack of variety. Very little animation.

**ENCOUNTERS** ..... 65  
You meet people almost every step of the way, but few of them have anything interesting to say and most of them look alike.

**CHALLENGE** ..... 70  
Will take a long time to solve, but only just because of the puzzle-like nature of gameplay is slow and in much of the game trial, error, and exploitation substitute for logic and ingenuity.

**SYSTEM** ..... 60  
Very easy on the eye, with clear and simple commands. Unfortunately the underlying game structure is a bit TOO simple.

**ACE RATING**  
**675**

Not a game that's going to send adrenalin levels soaring. The drama of the scenario isn't adequately translated into dramatic gameplay.

# A REALLY WICKED MIX...



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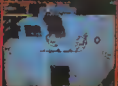
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# TEENWORLD



too; Overall rating: 81%

A. Smith  
Amiga Format (January issue)

\* It's one of the best 16 bit exploration games around. A great combination of platform and arcade adventure action. Overall rating: 81%

Computer & Video Games  
(January issue)

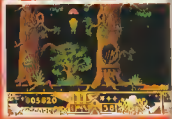
\* Teenworld is a lot of fun! Overall rating: 78%

Phil Kim, ZZAP (January issue)

A game created by Blue Byte



Available on ST and Amiga



Screenshots from Amiga Version

**UBI SOFT**  
Entertainment Software



The original Leisure Suit Larry was a milestone in computer gaming: it was one of the first titles to achieve significant penetration of the PC-compatible market and was partly responsible for software houses in the UK launching their attack on PC owners.

The formula for all the games is pretty simple. Fat, balding programmer Al Lowe has created his on-screen persona Larry Laffer to pursue his male fantasies in the form of a stable relationship with a good-looking girl. Although

many felt didn't live up to the promise of LSL1. In this new title the humour is more subtle, the locations more interesting, the animation more polished, and the story-line more absorbing. Throughout the game a series of excellent animated cameos include seeing little sheets of paper slip through photo-copiers, being beaten up by your boss, longing for Passionate Path in the piano bar of the Casino, and seeing several women in various states of undress.

**Watch out - he's back! SIERRA-ON-LINE's animated nerd with an insatiable desire for romantic encounters is once again in pursuit of a mate. This time, he's after Passionate Patti, who's got a thing about Pulsating Pectorals. Is this really just 'good clean fun', we wonder...**

Larry is a newwoman man, however, he can only achieve this status by flirting with every lady he meets, and so far the games have ensured that he meets quite a few.

It's this last bit that makes up the first of the reservations. Previous LSL titles have been entirely innocuous in their pandering to male fantasies, but LSL3 definitely goes one step

further and introduces graphics that are obviously designed to be as seductive as pixels can be. This may be easy on the eye, but it's also undeniably exploitative of women's bodies in ways that the earlier games weren't. If that sort of thing bothers you (and I'm not overstating this - the game has very clear mild pornographic tendencies) then the experience is going to be marred as a result.

Another weak



You've got 4000 points to score. Pick up two by looking at yourself in the mirror. You've got to look your best for Patti...

<b>LANDSCAPE</b>	85
Attractive animated scenes with some very colourful backdrops as Larry stumbles or - if you haven't got a 386 PC - stumbles across the screen.	
<b>ENCOUNTERS</b>	70
Lots of them, including some that might be considered in mildly dubious taste. It would be nice if Sierra could beef up the conversations though.	
<b>CHALLENGE</b>	50
Easy to get into, but you spend a lot of time covering the same ground. Most of the puzzles are solvable by examining everything in sight.	
<b>SYSTEM</b>	80
Weak animated adventure with occasional lapses of speed. Powerful PC system recommended.	

## ACE RATING 890

*Leisure Suit Larry* has become almost a legendary figure in PC gaming. This latest title confirms his...er...missionary status. It's a pity, however, that the series seems to be heading towards increased female nudity.

need a fast PC with EGA or VGA to get the best out of them. On a bog standard machine, many of the animated sequences are so slow as to be painful. This game isn't as bad as some of the earlier titles (*Kings Quest IV* in particular) but the speed still aggravates sometimes. It's also questionable whether text entry is really suitable for this sort of game, speed of interaction might well be improved with a menu-driven command system.

LSL3 is, despite its shortcomings, a very enjoyable romp and possibly the best of the Larry games to date. Let's hope we don't have to wait too long for the next one.

● See p.143 for release details

# LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

After his initial success in LSL1, Larry kicked off LSL2 by losing, in the first scene, his conquest of the previous game. He then finds true love on a Pacific Island, but in this latest title the same thing happens all over again. Life with Larry is obviously not a bed of roses, so our anti-hero is forced to abandon his flowery Bermuda pants, don once again his apologetically tasteless leisure suit, and set out on the search for a new companion in the island paradise of Nonloony.

With one or two reservations it's heartening to report that LSL3 is definitely quite a lot more enjoyable than the last game which

ness in the game concerns the way events are handled by the plot. For obvious reasons, certain things have to happen in sequence, but at the same time it's clearly an advantage to allow the player to wander around as freely as possible. This means that you often attempt to carry out an action, only to be told that you can't do it 'now' but you might like to try again 'later'. This clumsiness was a feature of several early text adventures and nowadays game designers usually find a way round it - in this case Sierra haven't.

The only other criticism is one that applies to all Sierra games, and that's that you really



This doe-eyed lady is more 'interested' in 'milking' and 'squirting' than in 'your body'. Tough luck...



# MYTH

## SYSTEM 3 weaves 8-bit magic

**IT** is very easy, when you have become used to the sort of quality and presentation usual in the best 16-bit games, to dismiss new 8-bit products as inferior lillies designed to run on inferior machines. It is also easy to believe that computers like the ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64 have already been pushed to the limit. There has been some very impressive software developed for both of these machines in their long existence. Many programmers have found ingenious ways to get around both machines' idiosyncrasies. So surely nobody is going to get anything more out of them? Wrong! System 3 have done just that with Myth.

The idea is that one of the gods, Dameron, has rebelled and begun to change history. It is

forbidden for any of the good gods to intervene directly in the course of history, so they assign a mere mortal (that's you matey) to travel through several time zones in order to put things right, and ultimately face Dameron himself. The zones you must travel through are Hell, Ancient Greece and the Hells of the Medusa, Ancient Rome, and Ancient Egyptian eras.

In each zone you must complete certain tasks in the correct order to restore the natural course of history and then go forward to the next zone. Unfortunately for you there are a number of creatures and traps in each section which, unless dealt with carefully, will thwart your progress.

To defend your self against them you initially have nothing but your fists, but other weapons can be collected as the game goes on. The idea is that, as the planned confrontation with Dameron gets nearer, your powers become more and more god-like.

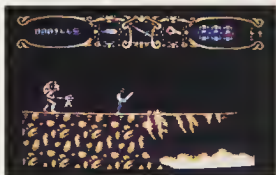
The game itself is essentially a two-dimensional scrolling game with platform elements. Now hold on there, before you turn the page, this isn't just any old platform game, it's the best I've ever come across, and I've played a few platform games. I can tell you. So what really makes Myth stand out from the crowd?

Well, the first thing that sinks you is the quality of the animation. You've never seen anything like this on either the Spectrum or the C64. Each figure is given a life of its own. For get stiff walks, unrealistic jumps, and unconvincing combat — you won't find any of those in this game. Every sprite from the beginning of the game to the end is captivating. As if that wasn't enough, just wait until you start moving the central character. The degree of control that System 3 has managed to squeeze out of the humble joystick is quite incredible. You'll really enjoy the way you can finely adjust your jumps and leaps, or the way you can duck and weave with the sword when you are tackling enemies.

The quality of the graphics alone would be enough to recommend this game, but there are yet more goodies in store. There is enough variety

here to keep even the most easily bored person going. Each section has a very different feel to it, creating its own very special atmosphere. Take, for instance, the vicious lightning while you are fighting aboard a Viking boat in the Ancient Norse era, or the gloomy, echoing halls of Medusa in the Ancient Greek era, both extremely good effects (better executed than anything I have seen in a similar vein). Then there is the way that weapons and items you collect must be used at the correct time and in the right way to complete each section (so you can't just hack your way through). The final confrontation is also very surprising, but you are going to have to find out about that for yourself. Add to this a tremendous soundtrack and spot effects, and you have one of the best 8-bit games ever created.

● Laurence Scotland



Oh dear! It looks as if you have been caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

### C64 VERSION

To be perfectly honest with you I've not seen anything as accomplished as this on the humble Spectrum. Having seen the game on the C64 first, I would have expected the programmers to have copied out on this version and gone for the usual monochrome screens. Not so — not only have they used all the available colours (yes, all eight of them), but I challenge you to discover any major attribute clash. In case you don't know the Spectrum that well, let me tell you, using lots of colour in a game of this type and managing to avoid attribute clash is not only very difficult, it's near impossible.

But, disregarding the tremendous technical achievement, there is just as good a game here as there is in the C64 version. Gameplay is slightly different, mainly in the way that puzzles are solved and each section is finished, but the atmosphere and variety is still there.

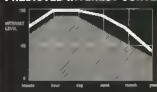
The only thing we couldn't check was the soundtrack, which has yet to be implemented, but the rest of the other elements were complete and extremely impressive. If you are a Spectrum owner you should buy this game. The chances are you won't come across a better product for your machine.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 5  
AUDIO N/A FUN FACTOR 5  
**ACE RATING 900**



Spectrum: Never mind the impressive sprite, just look at those clash-free colours.

### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Might not look very special at first sight. Just wait till you play.

### RELEASE BOX

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16 bit version to be released in 1990

### C64 VERSION

This almost looks like an Amiga game that someone has managed to get running on a C64. Superb animation. Immense sound and bags of atmosphere make this a must buy. If you want another reason for parting with your cash, it's also huge and there's lots of variety in it. I was impressed — you will be too.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 5  
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 5  
**ACE RATING 925**

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# TURBO OUTRUN

US GOLD goes back to the long and winding road with a sequel that's been widely awaited in the hope that it improves on the original!

**APES** evolved into humans, woolly mammoths evolved into elephants and OutRun evolved into Turbo OutRun. And somehow I don't think that Sega's classic rubber bumper got the best deal.

Sega's pioneering racer had everything: cars, girls, sun, surf and a beach-bopping soundtrack. The sequel had everything too — the only trouble was that it was the same everything. Any additions that were made to the second version were at best cosmetic and at worst a detriment to the gameplay: the Turbo button actually made the flashing Ferrari more difficult to handle, while the changing backdrops hardly made an ounce of difference to the action.

## AMIGA VERSION

You didn't spend all that money on Commodore's wonder machine to sit looking at awful still graphics and listen to the disk drive churn.

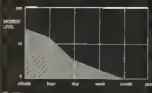
GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2  
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 2

ACE RATING 601

## ATTENTION C64 GAMERS

C64 Turbo OutRun slipped onto our desks as we were going to press. Superficially it looks and plays a lot better than the 16-bit versions — read next month's ACE for a full update.

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Drive that car... downhill.

The fact is that the original OutRun is one of those games that simply can't be bettered — in the arcades at least — so a sequel hasn't just got a tough act to live up to, it's got an impossible challenge ahead of it. But as far as the home computer conversions go, at least the second stab gives US Gold a chance to make amends for the dismal quality of the original effort.

Unfortunately though, that chance has been wasted. Programmed by I.C.E. (surely in this case it can't stand for I.C.E. Entertainment?), this suffers from all of the original's faults and adds a few for good measure. The most immediately off-putting feature is the awful visual style: the cars and backdrops are irritatingly two-dimensional, creating no feeling



Movement in the ST version is disappointingly blocky, and — even worse — the speed just doesn't impress.

of depth — but there's acute attention to detail in the roadside signs! What a weird sense of priorities.

And to cap it all, there's a massive wait between levels while the program loads the next chunk, which is unoriginal in this day and age and also serves to make the gameplay even more 'stop-start' than it already is.

Turbo OutRun has nothing new to offer and doesn't even retread the old ground to any great effect. There was never a great deal of potential in the unnecessary sequel, but I.C.E.'s version has made the worst of a bad job. It's filled the petrol tank with sugar — and failed to sweeten the pill.

● Brian Nesbitt

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## ST VERSION

At least the long wait between levels is cut out on the 1040 machines, but otherwise (unfortunately) it's business as usual.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 2  
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 2

ACE RATING 601



Doesn't look too bad does it? Well, on the page, anyway...

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## MICHAEL JACKSON MOONWALKER

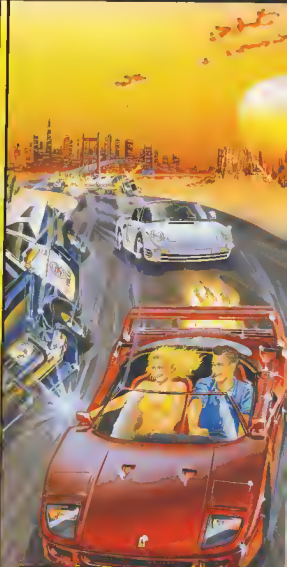


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# GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Grave goings on at US GOLD



## GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

is the sequel to Capcom's cutest game ever - *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*. It played like a Grimm Brothers' fairy tale and was the cutest thing you ever saw. Complete with a knight in shining armour, a princess to be rescued, magic spells, and spooky zombies and ghouls welking up out of the grave yard.

At first glance the sequel looks very much like the original - but it is actually a good deal tougher. Five levels of difficulty before you confront Lucifer in the final show down, where you can rescue the princess, may not sound like much - but once you start losing knights before getting anywhere to speak of on the first level, you soon see that you are up against one tough game.

The giant golden lion bars the knight's entry to level 3. He is difficult to kill because of his habit of leaping all over the screen.

You begin your quest armed with an unlimited amount of darts that you use to take out the various nasties that confront you as you dash from left to right. The weapon can be exchanged for an axe, time bomb, shield, or knife by grabbing the power ups that appear in the occasional treasure chest.

One of the best power ups to get is the magic suit of armour which gives your knight temporary invincibility, but caution needs to



exercised with the treasure chests. Instead of a power up, certain treasure chests contain a magician who pops up and turns you into a duck - which is no joke when you've got a princess to rescue and half a dozen zombies racing behind you.

If you survive the ghouls and manage to see off the mad boxer mid-way through level one you will come up against the first end-of-level nasty - a long-necked demon with a seemingly insatiable appetite for your arrows or axes. If you get the better of him he drops the key to the next level.

The next challenge is more of a platform test than the shoot 'em up nature of the first

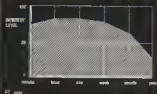




Pump the giant knight full of flak until he drops the key. This opens the door to level 2.

The key's yours. Watch out - level 2 is even nastier!

#### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Tough arcade conversion that will take considerable time to master.

#### ATARI ST VERSION

Very bright and colourful graphics are enhanced by the use of a black background. The game is very similar to the Capcom coin-op. Fast and unforgiving in its game play. Good use of sound effects and a suitable tune make for a first rate ST arcade game.

GRAPHICS 8 10 FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 905

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one. A series of intricate rope bridges have to be negotiated - without falling through the various holes that appear should you place your knight's foot on a rocky section of ladder. You won't actually fall that far - just below you is a pit complete with giant snails and other ghostly creepy crawlies, all crying out for lunch. Jumping out of the pit back onto the rope bridge requires very deft use of the joystick - you have to jump slightly upwards and then quickly change direction to enable your knight to secure his footing on the pit that is constantly moving.

If you survive this level and make progress in the following three you will begin to appreciate the fact that success depends on speed. The knight needs to be constantly moving forward - not just to avoid the ghouls and other nasties that are constantly welling up out of the ground, but also because there is a time factor to be taken into account. Daily too long on any level and you are likely to be told that you have "Run out of time".

It is the graphics that set *Ghouls n' Ghosts* a good few degrees above the dozens of 'rescue the princess' arcade adventures that have done the rounds. The detail of the knight and of the zombies and ghouls, their movements, and the back grounds make for a very pretty



arcade game. It turned heads when it appeared in the arcades and appears to be converted to a high graphical standard in all of the home versions ACE has seen.

But this cuteness should not blind gamers to the toughness of the challenge provided by *Ghouls n' Ghosts*. This is not for the uninitiated. You will find it addictive and enjoyable but be prepared to invest a goodly number of days - even weeks - of gameplay if you are serious about defeating Lucifer and rescuing the princess.

● Eugene Lacey



Don't stand and fight - this mad boxer in the middle of level one is tougher than any of the end-of-level nasties. Be scrappy...

# MOONWALKER

Wacko Jacko's soft shoe shuffle put US GOLD in the limelight.

**MICHAEL** Jackson's launch on computer had all of the razzamazz that you would expect to be associated with the world's number one pop music megastar.

US Gold did Jacko proud in the hype department with a mega bash at London's trendy Ultraviolet Club. There was booze and food in abundance, dancing till dawn, a cabaret spot by Rick Mayall, and even a Michael Jackson look-alike doing his stuff on stage for the hundreds of reviewers, distributors, retailers, and buyers who crammed in to the nightclub for the best PR do at the PC Show.

Whilst all this partying was going down, Emerald Software were putting the finishing touches to the game across the Irish Sea in Wexford.

Then Brian was to follow the Moonwalker film as closely as possible – not easy when you consider quite how ludicrous the storyline is. Get this: MJ is trapped in a maze and must find eight pieces of a bunny rabbit suit before hopping on a motorbike, whizzing through a city destroying bags of drugs, shooting it out with Mr 'Drugs Baron' Big's Storm Troopers in a night club, and finally rescuing Katy, the little girl who has been kidnapped by the drug dealers. It all ends with a shoot out in Mi Big's compound where Jacko has to destroy his giant laser cannon before turning into a space ship and shooting off to the stars where presumably he belongs.

This far fetched derring-do doesn't matter a jot in the film as it merely serves as a plot for the spectacular song and dance routines. Computer entertainment has got a long way to go before it can rival the best of Hollywood's film makers led alone Michael Jackson's feel, and so as a game structure it appears a little, well, banal. Hardly the most appropriate label for a superstar.

That, however, was the brief and you can't blame the programmers for it. It is also possible that they were hamstrung by Michael Jackson's publishers. The press release reads 'Michael cannot die, Michael cannot be seen to die on screen. No violence! Michael Jackson is very non-violence, so there are no weapons in the game until the 3rd level'.

'No weapons until the third level?' What is supposed to happen then? Does MJ cease to be anti-violent for this level? Surely some mistake. Snivelling it out in a nightclub with a bunch of storm troopers seems just a teensy bit removed from non-violence. It does, however, make for one of the best bits of the game.

Amazingly, in the face of all this nonsense,

Emerald have produced a half decent game. It is not a game for hard core gamers, veterans of tough arcade adventures, and state of the art shoot 'em ups. It is however well suited to younger players – particularly if they are MJ fans.

The opening maze game is Pacman like – combining the appeal of collecting the various bits of the suit and seeing the jigsaw puzzle take shape with the minor tactical diversion of avoiding your fans, most of whom have varying movement patterns and strategies. It's a shame there are no power-ups in this level – as it would have greatly improved game play if you could have had a go at some of the nasties. But then it's not level three so you are not allowed to be violent yet. The best you can do when the going gets tough is run away but you have a limited amount of energy for this so it's best saved for the really tight corners.

Once you get the suit, hop on the bike, and enter level two you are initially disappointed to find that it is pretty much identical to the previous level. However, there are more things to collect though – ten emeralds! To be precise – before you can metamorphose into the Stratos Can. You are racing against a time limit so you have to make use of the radar panel to locate the emeralds and gather them in the quickest way. Unlike most computer game radar devices this one does actually need to be used

and does also work. Bonus points are earned by destroying the bags of drugs by driving over them.

The nightclub scene is a welcome relief from the maze levels. At last you can grab a gun and start blasting the nasties that appear at the windows in this horizontally scrolling

level. The graphics are far superior in this section. Jacko walks and runs with some of the elegance that you would expect from the best dancer in pop music.

An even better shoot 'em is to be had on the final screen when you attempt to destroy Mr Big's giant laser. All anti-violence preciousness goes out the window as the game turns into a good old fashioned shoot 'em up. Jacko is now a robot and has to shoot all of the guards before he gets to the giant laser.

Only four levels of play – but reasonably absorbing game play – result in a game that's a definite must for MJ fans (a valuable piece of memorabilia?) Game play is more suited to



Level One and you're off kitted out with your bunny suit.

younger players – which is fine because most of MJ's fans are. The verdict for everyone else, however, is that the game is definitely not a 'thriller', but nor is it totally 'bad'. Not something, in short, that you'd make a long trek for.

● Eugenia Lacey

## ST VERSION

Disappointing sound track. The ST is capable of a lot better than this and when you consider the material Emerald had to work with there is no excuse for the awful 'pinkie-pleasy' rendition of the 'Bad' album title track. Graphics also leave a little to be desired on the first couple of levels. Technically not one of the best ST games around.

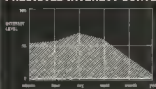
GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 5  
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 6

ACE RATING 650

## RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£19.99uk	IMMINENT
ST	£19.99uk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99uk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£9.99cs £14.99uk	IMMINENT
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## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Not enough variation in gameplay to raise the interest levels high either in the short or the long term.

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# TOOBIN'

DOMARK shoot the rapids in a rubber ring

**JET** and **Blf** are two reecee cool dudes, who like nothing better than stripping down to some crazy shorts, hopping on their loobs and launching into the nearest river. One bright Californian day, they decide to do just that – but this time they picked the wrong river.

The wrong rivers, to be more precise. Sick of the ponds back home, they decide on a spot of globe-trotting in search of some real action. Their padding japes take them along the Amazon, Yukon, Nile, Rio Grande and Colorado, and they're pretty crowded rivers these days. In fact, Jet and Blf have to be extra cool to get through the kind of hazards they face on this loob trip.

For example, each river has its own unique wildlife, such as hippos, crocs, submerged trees, snakes, fishermen's crazy floats, snub-mannes and (in a nightmare section) a hand that hacks at you with a knife. There are plenty more obstacles, all of which will deflate your rubber loob; and if it all gets too much, you can get rid of them with an expertly lobbed Coke can. Then there are hazards on the bank. Trees topple and fall into the water, anglers launch lines at you, natives use you as target practice for their blowpipes, sewage spills seep sneakily towards you. In canyons, rocks fall in the water far too close to your Bermuda shorts for comfort.

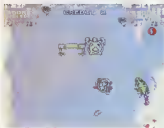
It's not all bad, though. If you're a particularly deft loob-maniaculator, bonuses lurk around every corner. Pass through gates without touching them for big points, collect cans to stock up on ammunition, chase after beach balls to speed you up, and collect patches for extra lives. In fact, if you manage to collect lots of points and avoid being killed, you'll qualify for extra-hard cool status.

At the end of each sub-stage you make a decision to paddle left or right through a canyon, choosing one route over the other determines which sub-stage you face next – and some are definitely more difficult than others. This is just one aspect of the game which makes it all the more enjoyable to come back to time and again.

Like the arcade parent, the home versions of Toobin' are great fun. The control method has been translated well from the two-button



Wobbling on his inflatable, Jet can throw Coke cans to remove dangerous obstacles and reveal bonus objects. Running into a tree, twig or anything else that's sharp will puncture his rubber ring and drown him.



In two-player mode, Jet and Blf battle it out for points and pride. The river seems a whole lot smaller when there are two toobs wobbling around.

coin-op system, and it only takes a minute to get used to. If you get bored of the solo game (which will take a long time), there's always the two-player option. Not only does this halve your credits, it also means you can push your mate into the nearest twig and pinch all the Coke cans before he can grab them. Whether or not you've played the coin-op, take a look at Toobin', because it's one of the most enjoyable games around this Christmas.

● Gordon Houghton

You're not alone out there on the river. Shore geeks peck things at you, crocodiles chase you from behind, hippos waddle up and gobble you up. Who's cool now?

## AMIGA VERSION

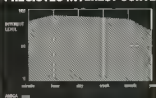
Detailed, colourful graphics (almost full screen scrolling), great music and heaps of playability make this a brilliant conversion of the coin-op – even if it's not completely accurate. Just the kind of game to cheer you up.

**GRAPHICS** 8 **IQ FACTOR** 4  
**AUDIO** 8 **FUN FACTOR** 9  
**ACE RATING 850**

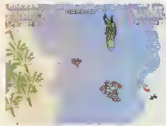
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AMIGA	£24 99dk	OUT NOW
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## PRE-EXISTING INTEREST CURVE



Fun from the start, the graded difficulty level, two-player option, and large number of levels guarantee its durability.



# DRAGON SPIRIT

Does Domark's Dragon do justice to the coin-op?

**DRAGON** Spirit is a relatively obscure and very tough coin-op which takes the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up theme into the realms of fantasy.

Eight completely different levels lie ahead of you, populated by unique opponents — all of whom will reduce your life-bar by one unit. Lose three units and you forfeit a life. At the end of each stage there's a fairly typical confrontation with a pretty awesome enemy which is very tough to kill.

Your basic weaponry consists of tireless bombs and the ability to spit fire-goblets, but this ammunition can be enhanced by bombing eggs on the ground. Blue eggs give you an extra head, and red ones give you an extra power unit; eventually, you can work your way up to a powerful flame-thrower.

Other enhancements come from killing flashing enemies. These include extra points, shields, mega-flame, multi-directional fire, homing flames and speed-ups.

In the end, Dragon Spirit is just a standard vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, but using a dragon as the main character rather than a fighter plane or spacecraft is a nice touch. All versions are characterised by poor sound effects, and that's the only real let-down. Domark's conversions contain all the features of the original coin-op and if you liked that, you should look at this.

● Gordon Houghton

## SPECTRUM VERSION

Probably best played with keys, since with a joystick you can't see and bomb at the same time (unlike the ST and Amiga versions). The sprites are nicely defined and animated, and the speed and tightness of the arcade game are well captured here.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 795

## ATARI ST VERSION

Smooth vertical scrolling and a pretty mean difficulty level make for addictive gameplay; however, the playing area is a bit small (compensated for by sideways 'push' scrolls), making it harder to anticipate attack waves. Still a good conversion, though.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 8

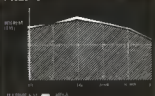
ACE RATING 795

## AMIGA VERSION

Probably the easiest version of them all, though it gets a lot tougher around levels five and six, and the dragon is a little slow to respond at first. It comes with a pleasant title tune, but more should have been made of the living and bombing effects.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 8

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initial frustration gives way to addiction as you learn to pick up extra weapons and avoid the predetermined attack patterns.

## RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99	OUT NOW
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# ROLLER COASTER RUMBLER

TYNESOFT'S Corkscrew Simulator

**WATERY** eyes, heaving guts, white knuckles. Know the feeling? If you do you're probably one of the millions of people who go on roller coasters for the express purpose and pleasure of turning their internal organs upside down. Most of the theme parks have closed down for the winter, so if you're still bent on pursuing the thrills and spills of the corkscrew, you'll just have to rely on your computer simulation of all that rough and tumble fun.

As solo player or one half of a lean, mean team of two, you're equipped with nothing but a bog-standard roller coaster car and a couple of bazookas strapped on to the front and back. The basic idea is simple, just blast the hell out of any obstacles that appear on the vector graphics track.

Targets range from multi-coloured balloons dangling innocently from the roller coaster structure, to huge airborne ships dropping missiles all over the track. In between, there's a whole selection of hazardous geometric objects — exactly what they're supposed to be is anybody's guess — placed at intervals along the line. Occasionally rhomboids and cylinders completely block your path. If you don't manage to shoot them in time, they'll do a limited amount of damage to your car. Hit too many and your damage meter plummets down to zero sending the roller coaster completely off the track.

The track itself is viewed in first person perspective from either the front or the back of the car. You travel at standard speeds (slow uphill, very fast downhill) unless you alter them using the relevant keypresses to accelerate or brake.

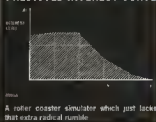
The objective on each level is to hit a specified amount of targets in a specified period of time. If the timer runs out or you run out of bullets, the run is over and you've lost the game. Finish with time to spare and you move on to the next track.

If you get bored of just going round and round the roller coasters, there's actually an extra option on the Amiga and ST versions, which lets you leave the park and go off into the surrounding landscape to blast whatever takes your fancy. The PC version even lets you try out a monorail ride.



Frightened yet? No, nor were we.

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The package comes with its own health warning: "Roller Coaster Rumbler is only for the totally radical rumbler". All I can say is that the totally radical rumbler must have a very powerful imagination. Jerky 3D vector graphics do not adequately capture the excitement of a roller coaster ride. It's difficult to blanch at hair-raising turns and death-defying dips when the track in front of you is an unrealistically weedy wireframe affair.

It's a pity because all the basic elements of a good game are here; different tracks, lots of

obstacles and even a convincing sense of speed (only if you use the speed up option). The movement is very jerky, especially if you choose off-track mode, and sound effects are uninteresting (though you get a decent soundtrack tape thrown in) but ultimately it's on the vector graphics that the roller coaster crumbles. Queue-factor is what Roller Coaster Rumbler definitely lacks.

Kai Hinz

## AMIGA VERSION

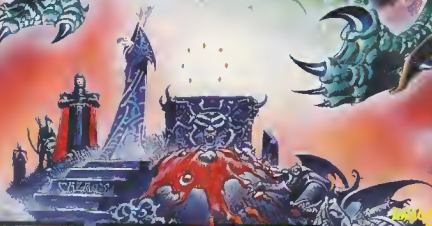
Neat presentation and rumbling heavy-metal style soundtrack tape can't make up for the hair-raising excitement that this so patently lacks.

GRAPHICS 4 IQ FACTOR 2  
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 5  
ACE RATING 463

## RELEASE BOX

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# TWINWORLD

Can a jumpy-jumpy, collect the objects, thwart Ultimate Evil, teen-sy-weensy sprite-typ scenario still cut the mustard in 1989?

UBISOFT surprise us...

**ANY** set of instructions that starts off with the heading 'The Legend of the Sacred Amulet' must surely strike terror into the heart of the majority of computer gamers. I ask you: The Listen with Mother school of game design.

Yup, we're scarcely in the Advanced Computer Entertainment market here, with a little man jumping around collecting 24 pieces of some stupid magic amulet that an evil something or other has scattered to the four winds. Fair and Evil (yaen!) will win and all the good little pawns will have their private parts dismembered. Help!!

Nevertheless, apart from the astonishingly bad quality of sampled music at the start of the game, as far as jumpy-jumpy games go, I quite enjoyed *Twinworld*. And I'll tell you this much - it's big! Two ST discs worth of jumpy-jumpy? When the sprites are this small, that's a lot.

The scam is that your nicely animated sprite, Ulopa, has to battle his way through the lands infested with evil, killing monsters for

have to go back and take the tube under the obstacle to come out on the other side.

Such a banal scenario must live or die by the implementation - and I'm happy to say that, on the whole, programmers Blue Byte have made a great job capturing an almost Super Mario feel in *Twinworld*.

The physics of your little hero appear to have been coded very well, so he has weight that is sensibly governed by gravity and momentum. This is in turn exploited by some of the puzzles - you make a jump, say, and if you don't reverse thrust straight away, it's the lava for you, m'lud!

Firing the bubbles isn't exactly straightforward either, with the exact parabolic trajectory depending on whether you're jumping up,



Uncollected acorns and clear graphics in *Twinworld*.

less money however, would probably still rather go for Rick Dangerous or wait for Dynamic Debugger.

John Cook

## RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST £19.99dk IMMINENT

AMIGA £24.99dk IMMINENT

No other versions planned

## ST VERSION

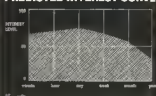
No serious technical stuff here and the sound could have been a lot more polished. However, the basic animation mechanics are slickly done.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 7

AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 7

ACE RATING 794

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



After gawping in disbelief at the old-fashioned scenario, old-fashioned playability gets the upper hand.



You can't hear the music in this shot - just as well!

You'll find you have a limited number of these, but extra can be obtained all

round the shop by picking up the magic poisons that are littered across the levels.

Each level has an upper bit on the land and an underworld bit - which often can only be accessed by having the correct key to get into a particular door. Look out for the odd ball-holes, however, which you can use to get to the underworld without using keys.

This underworld part is important, as it runs parallel to the upper bit - so if you find a jump that is just that little bit too much to take, on the surface - chances are you're going to

find the bonus you get for zapping a monster will vary depending on what type of bubble you use, too - the species being easily changed by a tap on the space bar.

Some of the jumps are difficult - some

of the puzzles are a bit infuriating - and you can proceed in the sure knowledge that if you haven't picked all the useful items up before you get to meet the chief baddy he'll probably pummel you to bits anyway.

But if you are the sort of person that craves the kind of agony/ecstasy gratification that this sort of game can deliver, however limited that sub-set of human beings might be, then this will undoubtedly be an essential purchase.

Those of us with more eclectic tastes and

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# BUSHIDO

FIREBIRD's beat-em-up arcade adventure

**BUSHIDO** is a Japanese term meaning 'the way of the warrior' - a kind of military ethics for early feudal Japan. In the ancient oriental province of Shimosu, two clans, the Tara (nasty) and the Genji (nice - your lot, obviously) are battling it out to decide who's best.

With typical bravado you decide that a lone fighter is the best option. You can choose one of eight different characters: they don't look very different on screen, but, as you discover after a while, they do behave in genuinely different ways during the game. Some characters are better at fighting (the Mountain Warrior, for example), whereas others are more skilled in guile (such as the Buddhist Monk).

After training your infiltrator you unleash him on the Tara fortress. This is a flick-screen environment but Grafikgold have added a bit of scrolling, which makes the rooms seem larger than normal and allows a bigger, more detailed main character - an unusual idea and one which works well. If this character gets killed, his magical belt will transport him back to base to recuperate, but he will have lost valuable time.

Most rooms contain special items to help you in your task: food, weapons, special

potions and wands (experimentation needed), and keys which to the next stage. When you're not searching and solving, you're battling it out with the opposition.

Truly interactive 3D forced perspective games have never worked too well on the 64, older titles like *Farlight* and *Nostalgia* were a bit too slow and only *Head Over Heels* managed to be addictive enough to compensate for the lack of speed. *Bushido* doesn't have the addiction of *Head Over Heels* (there isn't really enough to the beat 'em up action or enough problem solving), but it is very fast and very playable. Anyone who likes a good arcade adventure should check it out.

● Gordon Houghton

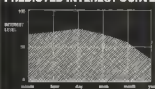
## C64 VERSION

A pleasant Oriental tune accompanies the equally pleasant (and usually bland) graphics. Everything here is in the gameplay.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 7  
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 759

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Once you've got used to all the game's different scenarios, there's enough fighting and searching ahead to keep you hooked.

## RELEASE BOX

C64 £9.99k £12.99k OUT NOW  
No other versions planned



The best 'em up sequences use several different weapons, but more moves would have enhanced an already good arcade adventure.

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# RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE

## ANCO versus *Super Sprint*

**IF** you've ever misspent happy hours grappling furiously in your pocket for yet more ten pence to shove into the slots at the local arcade, you'll know all about *Super Sprint* and its clones. You'll also know that what singles this particular style of racing game out from the others is that it lets up to four players take part simultaneously. The official *Super Sprint* conversions have only managed the usual two. Now, if you've got the right joystick adaptor, you can ease your throttle and lean up the road in a rubber-burning gang of four. That's if you've got an ST or an Amiga. 8-bit owners are stuck with gruesome twosomes.

As per usual there are four drivers per race with non-human competitors to make up the number. Whoever comes last gets replaced by a computer but if you make it into the top three, you're rewarded with points (4 for a win, 2 for second place and 1 for third). You can use these later on, if you feel like customising your motor.

Each player is given access to a personal monitor screen before the action starts. It's at this point that you get to select your control method; not just from joystick or keyboard but from an additional selection of three different joystick controls. It all hangs on whether you prefer your acceleration automatic or manual (either by pushing the joystick up or pressing the fire button). It's a nice touch, though there's not all that much to choose between them.

You also get to make your choice from a menu of car improvements. These include turbo acceleration, more sensitive steering, improved road holding capabilities, a higher top speed and reduced braking distance as well as increased pit efficiency to reduce pit times. This is also where you'll be able to turn your points into extra equipment in between each race.

The single screen tracks throw up all sorts of obstacles in various combinations of farmac and dirt, harpin bends, bridges, railway tracks, roundabouts, fords and chicanes. If anything, and your mean machine immediately bursts into flames and is replaced by another one a few yards back. Drive too fast, and you'll skid or spin off the track, wasting valuable seconds. If it should get dark in the middle of a race, your headlights automatically come on.

None of this is breath-takingly new or innovative, but it's a tried and tested formula which has proved extremely addictive in the arcades. It also relies heavily on a user-friendly control method and that's exactly what *Rally Cross Challenge* hasn't got. It's far too easy to crash

for a start. Touch a barrier, nick a chicane or graze the side of a bridge and your engine bursts into flames and pulls you temporarily out of the race. After a few laps of exploding around the track this can start to get extremely frustrating, especially as the computer drivers never seem to make the same mistake.

It's all the more disappointing because the excellent graphics, slick presentation and wide variety of courses are a constant reminder of what *Rally Cross* might have been. If it weren't for the control method this would be a top-class racing game. As it stands, it's just too awkward to be anything more than mediocre.

● Kari Hanza



Rule 2 *Anco Rally Cross Handbook*: competitors who jump the lights are automatically penalised.

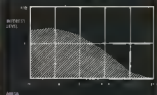


Anco's *Rally Cross* looks and sounds a lot like *Super Sprint*; pity it doesn't play as well.

### RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
PC	£19.95dk	1990

### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Nice-looking *Super Sprint* derivative which is marred by poor controls.

### AMIGA VERSION

Despite the control difficulties, the colourful graphics, a wide variety of courses and lots of animated details make this look very attractive. Sound is limited to a few droning effects. It's still the best driving game of this type out on the Amiga though, as *Super Sprint* (excellent on the ST) has never been converted for the machine.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 3  
AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 657

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## SILKWORM

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we're still under threat. There's no one left to press the Nuke button so the battle has switched to copters and plane. Non stop shoot 'em up arcade action.



## CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

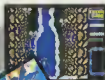
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COMING SOON!



COMING SOON!

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VIRGIN GAMES  
24 VERNON YARD  
119 PORTOBELLO ROAD  
LONDON W11 2DX

As you can see, *Interdictor's* graphics could hardly be described as realistic — they are fast though.

**FLIGHT** simulators have always been amongst the most popular form of computer entertainment and the Archimedes has, at last come of age, with the arrival of *Interdictor*.

Put in control of a high-performance jet, your task is to fly along an enemy valley, destroying gun emplacements, capturing airfields and generally causing as much aggro as possible to the 'other side'.

You start at your own base, armed with a selection of weapons. Rapid cannon fire destroys gun bases, whilst more powerful rockets enable you to blow up anything from enemy barges to bridges. Heat seeking missiles make ideal deterrents when air-to-air combat is the only option left.

As well as weapons, your jet is equipped with all the usual instruments you'd expect on board. A radar and a map allow you to (hopeful-ly) spot enemy aircraft before they spot you,



# INTERDICTOR

CLARES send the Archimedes skyward, but the interest level remains earthbound...

whilst various meters provide information regarding your height and speed. A head-up display (permanently overlaid over the front cockpit view) shows the rate of climb using a scale of pitch bars. These are numbered from 9 to 9 and move up or down depending on your current attitude (or angle!).

Control of the aircraft is provided through the mouse, or by using an optional joystick (available from Velmace). Sensitivity of control can be anything from sluggish to feather-light. The middle setting gives the best compromise, although it's worth changing to the lightest when accurate control is needed, i.e. flying under (and along) bridges. An 'Autolab' instrument acts rather like stabilizers on a bicycle keeping you level(ish) when control gets out of hand. Very useful.

Now, enough of the theory. How does it fly? Engines on, brakes off and we're away. Pulling the mouse back slightly, raises the nose and the jet lifts off into the blue skies.

One of the main selling points of *Interdictor* is its 'attention to detail', although I would hardly say that the odd pyramid and the occasional rectangle go to make up a 'realistic' landscape. About the best stationary graphics are the bridges. The actual plotting can be a bit haphazard, at one time, the view out of the right window showed two mountains, with the furthest plotted on top of the nearest!

The enemy (aircraft, trucks and barges) are by far the best graphics in the whole game, although it is rare that you'll get close enough to take a decent look. Perhaps if a little more thought had gone into the landscape, the 'real-

istic' label would be justified. Maybe it's meant to be Brazil you're flying over and all the trees have been cut down!

Flying the jet is easy enough and it doesn't take long to master rolls, loops and other acrobatic feats. I can't help feeling it's all a little too easy though. Taking off along the width of the runway and going straight into a vertical climb? I think not. There's no mention of the Harrier in the instructions but who am I to argue? Crashing is realistic though. Hit the ground and you're dead!

Fortunately graphics aren't the only part of a game. This is no Chaplin film and sound makes an appearance wherever possible. Whether it's the roar of the engine as you tax along the runway, or the thudding explosions as your rockets bring the bridges down, all the sound-effects are excellent. Played through a decent amp, you could almost believe you were there — in the plane, not on the bridge!

To sum up, what could have been an excellent game, is marred by some careless mistakes, and also a general lack of interesting 'things' to do. The whole program goes fast, although this is mainly due to (a) it being run on an Arc, and (b) there isn't much going on anyway!

Unfortunately *Interdictor* isn't a touch on the latest 16-bit simulators (Bomber for instance), which is a shame. The Arc is capable of so much more and I hope CLARES realise this. Given it's raw power, the Arc could and should out-perform any 16-bit machine available.

What there is of *Interdictor* is playable and fun for a few hours. Once you've bombed the bridges and managed to land the jet a few times, there isn't much to hold your interest.

Let's hope the first flight simulator for the Arc isn't the last.

• Rob Miller

## RELEASE BOX

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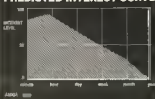
## ARCHIMEDES VERSION

Fast as you'd expect, but the power of the machine could have gone towards handling a more complex scenario rather than simply dishing out speed. Good sound though.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 3  
AUDIO 8 FUN FACTOR 6

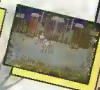
ACE RATING 650

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Should take you about three weeks to master, after which interest levels drift earthward.

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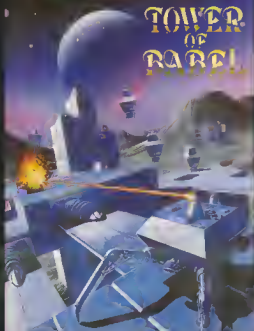
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# OUT OF THIS WORLD

## TOWER OF BABEL

An intricate 3D strategy game involving an interconnecting network of towers, platforms and lifts all rendered in solid 3D with innovative light and shading techniques. Take control of robot spiders and program them to solve problems and puzzles and interact with other creatures, such as Pushers, Zappers and Grubbers. Alternatively, real time control is available to you at any time for instantaneous reaction to the game's developments. For the more adventurous among you, there is a complete game designer, allowing the construction of your own series of towers, platforms and lifts. Attempt to fox your friends with your own fiendishly difficult creations. More than just a game, more than just a puzzle - Tower of Babel is a whole new concept in strategy gaming.



## TOWER OF BABEL



90%  
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# IT CAME FROM THE DESERT!

CINEMAWARE produce their best game yet: great graphics, great sound, *giant ants*...

**EPIC** that's one word you could use when describing the latest – and arguably greatest – game to come over the Atlantic from the Cinemaware Corp. It Came From the Desert. Three Amiga discs this time, gup.

Power up the first disc and **BLAMM!** – special effects, sampled music, sampled sateech, the works. Not so much a loading screen, more an introductory disc. In 1985 you'd have put up Defender of the Crown to impress the neighbours. In 1989 you plug in Disc 1 of Desert. But what about the game itself?

Drawing again from movie cliché this time Cinemaware have captured the 'Bug' movie legend perfectly (for the original see movies like Attack of the Killer Tomatoes). In a delightful send up of a genre – never lapsing into the kind of mud-slinging that would break the spell – the program enters into a conspiracy with the player to believe that he (sexism is part of the cliché, unfortunately) is Geologist Greg Bradley working in the small 50's desert town of Lizard Breath.

You are a relative newcomer to the place, conducting research into the mineral content of meteor fragments, when a particularly unhealthy specimen plunks down just outside the town and – unbeknown to the innocent inhabitants – somehow produces a breed of giant ants that will overrun the town in 15 days. Unless you can intervene for the good guys!

In fact there are two parts to it. Game: From the Desert. First you have to collect enough evidence to convince the local Sheriff that the problem is real and convince him to call out the National Guard. After that you direct the forces against the invasion and finally seek out the lair of the ants and destroy the Queen Ant and the nest. No problem, eh?

Cinemaware being the company that it is, the standard of both static and animated

graphics is impeccably high. In the past, the main complaints have been against gameplay – here there is more than enough game and playability in it to satisfy most punters.

The main shell of the game has two elements – your view of static locations, in which you can interact with a particular person shown to be present, via a highlighted response menu plus a scrolling map of the town. Moving the screen pointer to each location will give you its name, plus the amount of time it will take you to get there.

Time is, in the present crisis, clearly of the essence and the game is played realtime, with a second of realtime accounting for a minute in Lizard Breath.

The attendant arcade sequences are a mixed lot. The one-to-one ant fights (where you have to shoot off the giant antennae, incidental) are simple, relevant and well implemented. The above view games where you are fighting the ants en-masse are fun and have a direct bearing on the outcome of the game. Whether the same can be said of the knife fight (some of the inhabitants are a trifle violent) and the 'Chicken' driving game is more open to debate.

However, fail in any of the games and you find you sell in hospital sentenced to any number of days on a diet of Jello. Attempted escape (so as not to loose time) leads into a hilarious top-down game where you try to evade the hapless nursing staff and make it to the main entrance! Pivoting sampled screams of, That's Hurl about to make this game a comic extravaganza!

Taken as a whole, ICFTD is probably the best yet from Cinemaware – with special merit going to an atmospheric soundtrack – and any-



EEK! It's ENORMOUS, Sidney!

one who enjoyed previous efforts are certain to enjoy this one.

But the fact that it's a 1 Meg only game and in many ways the gameplay itself, show that the company has probably reached the near limit of what can be achieved using its present design philosophy and technology. Never satisfied with second best, it'll be interesting to see which way they go next.

John Cook

## RELEASE BOX

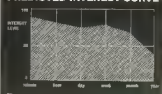
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
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## AMIGA VERSION

As usual Cinemaware do their best to squeeze the utmost out of the machine. No great technical feats, but the highest quality of presentation.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 895			

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Definitely one to show the neighbours, and enough variety of gameplay to keep you going for quite some time.



Yes, it was worth getting an Amiga, daddy.

# GHOSTBUSTERS

Four years after the block-busting success of GB1 and David Crane's funky computer adaptation, ACTIVISION serves christmas spirit with its turkey...

**SNORTING** cocaine isn't the wisest of pursuits – as actor James Belushi was (so it is rumoured) unfortunate enough to find out. It not only cost him his life but a leading role in one of the biggest grossing comedies of all time.

A staggering boxoffice revenue of \$220 million has inevitably spawned numerous cash-ins, including two lacklustre cartoon series: *The Real Ghostbusters* and *Simer! And The Real Ghostbusters* plus associated paraphernalia such as action figures keep the bills ringing.

A film sequel was inevitable, but it almost didn't happen. Fortunately the original crew got back together and as a result *Ghostbusters II* was able to pick up the story four years after the team bused the demonic gatekeeper (that was Impossibility Sigourney Weaver's fridge, paranormal forces return to the city – and when Weaver, now a single mother, notices strange things happening to her baby, who's she gonna call?

The remnant *Ghostbusters* find themselves doing battle with a river of slime (which grows in response to people's negative emotions) flowing under New York and threatening to engulf the city. The slime's destination is traced to an Art Gallery in the centre of the city, and in it lies an ancient and mysterious painting of an evil wizardly warlord called Vigo.

Activision's computer incarnation of the original film has reputedly sold in excess of 2,000,000 units, which must please its designer, the near-logically David Crane (who was also responsible for finding those Little Computer People! The task of converting the sequel however was carried out by Foursfield (Incredible Shrinking Sphere and the conversions of *Time Scanners*).

But whereas Mr Crane chose to exploit the general Ghostbusting theme of the film as opposed to more specific elements like the Marshmallow Man, Foursfield has chosen to exploit specific aspects of the film – three 'key' scenes, interspersed with choice snippets of digitised imagery from the film.

A sampled remix of the original *Ghostbusters* theme and a neat introductory sequence create a film-like atmosphere before the game proper begins. The first section sees a *Ghostbuster*-besotted Dan Aykroyd (he wasn't dressed like this in the film) being lowered down a shaft. Spooks attack from all sides (not in the film they didn't), and Dan shoots them with his weapon while swinging from side to side – his main aim is to collect three pieces of a scoop which is used to collect a sample of slime from the river below (well Dan did have

to collect some slime in the film, but he was already armed with the scoop).

Fast-forwarding through the best part of the movie, Section Two has you in control of the Statue Of Liberty and a crowd of native New Yorkers. The idea is to guide her along the horizontally scrolling street, shooting oncoming ghosts with her torch. The crowd is used to collect the ectoplasm released by dead (i) ghosts while avoiding other ghosts on the floor. Quite where the torch and ghosts came from is anyone's guess.

The final section sees the 'busters' inside the Art Gallery in a confrontation with the arch-villain Vigo. Having carefully lowered the four *Ghostbusters* down a rope into the gallery (but not too fast or they die), your first objective is to dispose of Janosz (Vigo's mortal mirror) and rescue the baby to prevent Vigo's power being boosted. But then Vigo steps out of the painting and, via telekenesis, pulls the baby towards him. Quick! Avoid the energy bolts he unleashes and shoot him to win the game.

Control of each *Ghostbuster* is transferred via a separate screen, complete with digitised mugshots. A twist in the gameplay sees two of them armed with proton guns, and two with slime guns. Janosz has to be shot with the slime, and Vigo (who steps out of painting once the baby is recovered) with the proton.

Apart from the stills and explanatory text, a digitised picture of Vigo is shown following the team's failure, and Janosz is heard to say: "You are like the buzzing of flies to heaven".

And that's your lot. Even more astounding



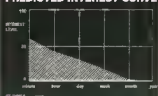
but true, these three scenes take up three Amiga disks (a staggering FOUR on the ST), and it's a case of musical disks until you turn off *Sady*. *Ghostbusters II* looks like being one of the biggest turkeys you are likely to see this Christmas. It fails to succeed both as a film conversion and as a game in its own right. Interestingly enough the film was originally going to be called *The Last Of The Ghostbusters*. After this, I hope it is

• Brian Nesbitt

## RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£24.99cd	IMMINENT
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## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Watch And Wipe software at its best. See the film instead – it's considerably cheaper and much more entertaining.

## ST, AMIGA VERSIONS

Nice graphics, debited but not amazingly colour. Sound is very impressive sampled stuff – the *Ghostbusters* theme. Both 16-bit versions make equivalent uses of their machine's potential, but early sightings of the 8-bit versions show that it's the gameplay rather than the presentation which really determines the quality – or lack of it.

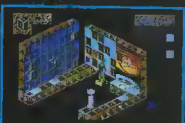
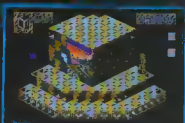
GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 2

AUDIO 0 FUN FACTOR 2

ACE RATING 251



# NEVERMIND



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Screen Shots taken from the Amiga and PC Versions

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- Strategic gameplay giving months of enjoyment.
- Fast paced action.
- Superb graphics.
- Immense play area with four decks and entire alien vessel.
- Attention to detail gives total enjoyment.
- Choice of action orientation or deep strategy play.

ANOTHER RAINBIRD CLASSIC



# GALAXY FORCE

ACTIVISION convert  
Sega's eight-legged  
arcade monster.

**GALAXY** Force was a coin-op for the sea side piers and larger downtown arcades. An eight-legged monster with a hydraulic seat, massive screen, and speakers tucked into every nook and cranny, it was a monster – even by Sega's gangster standards.

As is often the case, the deluxe hydraulic version was something of a loss leader for the larger number of uprights that were to follow. Unfortunately for Sega, the game just didn't seem the same without your seat being thrown back as the ship zoomed forwards. After one short summer season *Galaxy Force*, the zenith of bells-and-whistles hydraulic arcade entertainment, had just about disappeared.

Meanwhile, Activision boss Rod Couzens announced that autumn to a press gathering at the London Intercontinental Hotel that his company had signed the rights and would be converting it for home use in Christmas '89. A few months dropped open in disbelief. Was this sorceryism premature?

The results of this conversion are very far from what most people who have played the coin-op would regard as being a game of *Galaxy Force*. There has to be a point where the experience of playing the home version is so different to the experience of the coin-op that it is reasonable to put the question: are they the same thing at all, and – if not – is it therefore far that they carry the same name?

The coin-op had amazingly fast, detailed, and colourful graphics with a space ship for you to control that could slow down, speed up and turn through almost 360 degrees. The ST version is slow, has blocky graphics utilising a very limited colour palette, and does not flip through 360 degrees, or anything remotely like it.

The five levels are selected by pulling the joystick to the right bringing into view a cameo view of the terrain on each level. They vary from aerial combat to caverns, trenches and deep space. Apart from blasting anything that is locked onto by your computerised cross-hair your aim is also to penetrate the enemy fortress and destroy their HQ.

Each of the five levels plays very much like the last one. There are power-ups but these offer little discernible difference to your ship. Shield strength and energy bonuses are registered in your control panel as is a digital display of the time left to complete your mission.

About the best part of the game is when you are inside the fortress and have to swing right and left to avoid crashing into the walls; but this too is let down by poor control of the ship and the inability in certain situations to 'right' your position should you collide with a wall.

What *Galaxy Force* boils down to is a very



3D deep space really shouldn't be as blocky as this.

rudimentary 3D shoot'em up with average graphics and sound. The coin-op relied heavily on the gaspability of the graphic wonders that could be created by its twin 32-bit processors and 16-bit sound processor. The game design was never much to write home about – and without the all singing, all dancing, rock'n'roll hydraulic cabinet it just isn't the same.

● Eugene Lacey

## RELEASE BDX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
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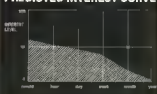
## ST VERSION

Diminutive was the development house who put their name to ST *Galaxy Force*. I can't believe it is one of their proudest achievements. The 3D routines just aren't convincing. Its graphics are C64, circa 1985, standard.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	3

ACE RATING 395

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Not exactly in the great tradition of arcade conversions, *Galaxy Force* fails to impress from the start and never recovers.



**ANYBODY** remember Paul Shirley? Well, if your games-playing history doesn't go back beyond a couple of years, it's a good bet you don't. But if you're a seasoned gamer, you're most likely to reply, "The Paul Shirley?" as young Paul was the man behind *Spindizzy*, an upmarket clone of Atari's *Marble Madness*, and one of the true all-time computer classics which, sadly, never made its way onto the 16-bits.

Now, after a two-year absence, Paul has returned with *Quartz*, another brilliant clone – but this time he's not drawn inspiration from any one game, but from every shoot 'em up ever written! *Quartz* traps you inside a huge crystal, with the simple objective of escaping – alive.

Anybody who knows anything about physics will tell you that a crystal is composed of many different layers, and it's these layers that form the basic layout of the game. The



# QUARTZ

lynchpin of the entire game is the Lattice, an eight-way scrolling sheet 'em up set in the core of the crystal and based on the classic Asteroids. Here, though, the asteroids are replaced by coloured Hadrons that float around the Lattice. Shooting the Hadrons break them up into smaller Quarks which in turn become collectable Neutrinos when shot. Collect the correct amount of each colour Neutrino, and they can be traded in for a powerup, and this is where the real fun starts.

Your ship is equipped with three empty weapon slots (upgradable to six), where weapons are placed when purchased. This system allows any combination of the ten weapons to be fitted, so – depending on your playing style – you could have three Octagons, an Octagon, plus a Bomb and a Flame, or anything you like. The function keys switch the weapons on and off, allowing you to switch over to the correct weapon for the next section.

RELEASE BOX		
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## AMIGA VERSION

It's business as usual apart from the soundtrack – it's more technically accomplished than the ST's as you would expect with sampled speech, but it's not the same racy lure – it's a more downbeat affair that doesn't work quite as well.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATING 905

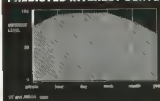
The man behind  
*Spindizzy* returns with  
a stunning shoot-em-  
up for FIREBIRD.

After a minute or so of blasting and collecting, you are dragged off course into one of the four other layers of the crystal. The Atomic Zone is the classic left-to-right scrolling sheet 'em up with a number of novel twists (rotating arms of flame, for example, similar to those in *Super Mario Brothers*) and The Nucleus, an end-of-level badde that must be destroyed one cell at a time.

The Void scrolls from top-to-bottom. Nothing special there, but the swarms of aliens are accompanied by meteors that come OUT of the screen all out, *Galaxy Force*-style, gun installations, and an even tougher guardian. The Lar scrolls from right-to-left and plays like a mirror image of the Atomic Zone, but is much tougher due to the deadly force fields and electric storms. Finally there's the Organic Zone, a classic bottom-to-top vertical scroller in the Xenon mold where everything has an Alien-esque slimy feel – look out for the pulsating brain at the end!

When one of the sections is completed, it's back to another, tougher Lattice, swarming with aliens as well as Hadrons. And so it goes on...

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



You can't go wrong!

## ST VERSION

The soundtrack is perhaps this version's strongest aspect – fast, moving, bouncy and everything else an action game theme should be. Can't wait for the CD Single!

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 4  
AUDIO 9 FUN FACTOR 9  
ACE RATING 905

*Quartz* is sheer brilliance – virtually flawless in every aspect. Each of the five separate levels is a respectable game in its own right, but banded together they make an awesome combination. It's tough...but not so tough as to be frustrating or off-putting. Aesthetically, it's a dream; with Bob Stevenson's top-hole graphics lend a touch of class together with some of the best soundtracks heard on the ST and Amiga to date. *Quartz* is an amazing game seriously rivals *Xenon II* in the shoot 'em up stakes.

● Gary Whitta

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US



# DRAKKHEN

RPG Français from Info-  
games...

**OF** late, the French have started issuing a more than serious threat to the British software market. With the excellent *Future Wars* hitting the shelves over Christmas and now *Drakken*, it looks like 1990's going to be a heady year for the Gallic software tycoons.

*Drakken* is a stylish role play, set in your typical run-of-the-mill fantasy world, bringing together four adventurers to triumph over yet another horde of evil demons. As with most RPG's you have to create your little band from scratch, but you cannot re-roll the dice to change a character's statistics, so it's quite easy to have a varied party. With a choice of fighter, scout, magician or priest you can play the field and have an immense number of abilities at your disposal.

All commands are issued via the mouse and the return key, then through a pleasantly tidy operating system. When the group travels across the land, they move as a unit. Pressing return divides the party into the four members. From there you can send each one on a separate task.

The only problem with moving the group (or a character) to a different location is the time factor, first you select where you want

them to go, then all back and wait for them to get there, taking all of half a minute at times.

Manipulating on screen objects is achieved by placing the cursor over them then clicking the left button, similar to the system in the Sierra games. There is also a list of commands which are accessible when an individual character is selected, including a useful search facility.

Interactions between computer controlled characters and your team is basic but effective. You're given the choice of greeting, questioning or impressing them. Most of the time any of these will obtain a useful reaction, though on the odd occasion they will attack.

Combat is also executed in a simple, effective manner: merely click the pointer on the creature you wish to maim and the character nearest will strike a blow. Naturally you can expect some fierce retaliation. Spells can be used by the magician and priest and are operated in much the same way as the combat,

select a spell and click where you want to activate it.

As RPG's go *Drakken* is a fine game, though perhaps lacking the depth that makes a classic game. But on the whole a fun, lasting fantasy jaunt.

● Mark Patterson

## RELEASE BOX

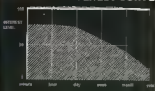
ATARI ST	£29.99uk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£29.99uk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

## ST VERSION

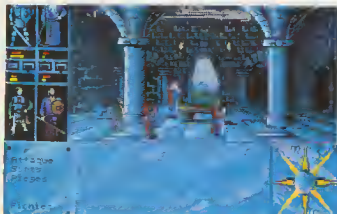
The major plus is the speed. Combined with the smooth command system, the game flows very smoothly. The graphics are utilitarian, but provide a few nice surprises later on in the game. A worth while RPG.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	8
ACE RATING 820			

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Great fun to get into, and a pleasure to be treated with typical US attention to detail, but in the end the action loses interest.



The four adventurers (seen in the status panels to the side of the screen) begin to explore an ancient building. As you can see, *Drakken*'s atmospheric 3D graphics are extremely impressive.

# Austerlitz

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*Play AUSTERLITZ, and take up the challenge that gives you the chance to rewrite the history books!*



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# THE CYCLES

ACCOLADE put the PC on two wheels and give you 15 tracks to choose from.

**EXACTLY** what kind of bizarre chmeia you'd get if you fused a stereotyped bike with the average PC user must stretch even the most vivid of imaginations. I can envisage the scene now.

Dressed in full M&S rig - with tassels - he approaches the machine. Nonchalantly mounting the swivel chair, he whips off the studded leather dust cover (IBM Roofs) and powers up the International Bonneville Machines 45 Mhz 386 with an 80 Meg hard disc.

The internal drive grows into life as the whole kit suges power into the customised monitor. As the C prompt bursts onto the screen he sends the mouse screaming across the desk into a full blown wheelee and taking the first double click blindingly fast, brings up... well... The Cycles probably.

Published by US firm Accolade, programmed by the Canadian mob at DSL, The Cycles is very much a transatlantic product aimed at the recreational PC user and attempts to capture the thrills, spills, hills, and chills of international Grand Prix motor cycle racing. And it's nothing if not comprehensive.

As you can expect from US software, there are options galore before you even set foot on the tarmac. Take a practice lap, a single race, or go for the big one - a full season of 15 races, each round a different track. Choose a difficulty level - there are five in all from easy-peasy auto gear change, undamagable bike and boy scout opposition to full manual, full realism on a track full of Hells Angels.

Choose name, number of laps per race, then go on to choose your weapon - 125cc, 250cc or the big mutha - a 500cc racing beast. Four cylinders, six gears, 165mph at full wack. Outfit So on to the race itself.

Selecting one track from 15 international venues (the Brit track is Donington Park, not Silverstone - boo!) you find your view is a classic 'over the handlebars' job, rather than the behind the bike view of, say, Hang On or Honda RVF. First thing - you take one lap to qualify for a place on the grid. Woool.

Using joystick or keyboard, the controls are simple enough - faster/slower, left/right,

change up or change down - and quite responsive. Particularly good news for non-standard joystick owners is that you calibrate your stick before the race.

Zooming off the grid at high speed (on the higher difficulty this levels results in spectacular whieeies) you have the track to yourself and there's no denying that it's fun. Going into a turn does not tilt the horizon - that stays level the whole time - but the handlebars turn in, and the right clutch hand animates when you change gear.

Another neat touch is the way that track gradients have been handled, with quite realistic dips and hills to encounter - certainly the best I've ever seen on a PC to date.

Finish the lap, get a grid position and the real thing starts - against nine other guys. Some dive pretty damn fast and all seem to get in the way just when you'd rather they didn't. All ex-bike messengers probably.

The whole event is undoubtedly a good laugh and if you want to take on a whole season the program even allows you to save position and come back to complete the marathon another time. But does The Cycles ever manage to make you suspend your belief that you are ever doing anything other than playing a computer game? Unfortunately not.

Pally it's the hardware limitations of the PC. Most of us will have to put up with Spectrum-standard sound - although those with Tandy sound or Ad Lib boards will do much better. The graphics can't be to blame - EGA is fine and CGA is, well, adequate.

yucky CGA.

Probably I'd pinpoint lack of speed as the major factor. It's not that Cycles is slow, far from it, but it doesn't seem to deliver quite fast enough to convey that extra bit of realism the hardened computer bikes will hunger for. Makes you wonder how much of an overhead that very nicely implemented, but largely unused, rear view window takes up?



Heading up to the finish (with most of the other competitors ahead of you unfortunately) in glorious 3D on the PC.

However, The Cycles still comes well into the category of quality product and as long as your expectations are not unrealistic will not disappoint if you're looking for a fun race game with enough options to make sure you'll be playing it for more than the customary couple of weeks. Yet another reason to consider buying a sound board, too!

John Cook

## RELEASE BOX

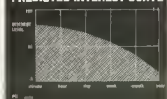
ATARI ST	E24 990k	IMMINENT
AMIGA	E24 990k	IMMINENT
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## PC VERSION

The sound rating given - for the unexpanded PC. Otherwise the game makes good use of the world's latest & greatest games machine.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	7
ACE RATING 773			

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Greatest fun to get into, and a pleasure to be treated with typical US attention to detail, but to the end the action loses interest.

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# SNARE

THALAMUS ensnare late night game addicts with their newest puzzler

**QUEDEX** remember that? Well, unless you're a C64 owner who enjoys puzzle type games you probably won't. The idea behind the game (which incidentally gained an ACE Rating of 934 in our very first issue) was that you controlled a ball rolling across a series of planes. The aim was to exit each plane in the quickest possible time, but in order to do this you had to solve some very tricky problems first. The resulting game was addictive enough to keep even the most somnolent person playing all night.

Thalamus' latest puzzler, *Snare*, is very much in the same vein. This time, rather than a ball, you control a small spacecraft which glides over a platform. Using the joystick you can control the craft's speed and direction, as well as making it fire and jump. Turning is a little confusing at first because the whole screen suddenly flips through 90°. Until you become accustomed to this it can be very disorientating, especially if you make several turns in quick succession. Eventually you think nothing of it, but it is still quite confusing watching somebody else play.

Mastering jumping is absolutely essential, because there are many occasions on which you have to leap chasms between platforms. It's not just a case of moving to the edge of the platform and leaping aither. You have to carefully gauge your speed on the approach. Get it too slow and you won't make the distance and consequently end up plummeting to a very sticky end. Approach too quickly and you'll probably overshoot and smash into a wall on the opposite platform.

Again the idea behind this game is to find the transporter that allows you to exit each level. Occasionally a level will be divided into several sections, each of which is linked by a further transporter pad.

Solving each level is not quite as simple as

gliding about until you find the exit however. Firstly, each level is divided up into corridors by walls. Hit one of these and you're a goner. Secondly there are a number of special tiles strategically placed on each level. Each of these has a different effect on your craft if you pass over them. The effects vary from minor inconveniences (like preventing you from turning) to disasters (sending you hurtling forward at full speed towards a nearby wall for instance).

Each of the different types of tile is colour coded, but it is all too easy to forget which does what. This is the one small gripe I have — it would have been better if each tile had a completely different design rather than just being a different colour. The problem is not enough to spoil the game however.

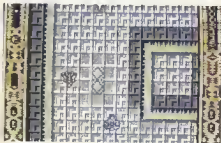
Another problem you have to face are the alien ships which patrol each level. These keep to set routes rather than attacking you directly. Contact, however, is still deadly. It will do you no good whatsoever to simply blast every alien ship you come across (some of them are indestructible anyway). Many of them are essential to the completion of the level. In some cases you must redired the alien by baking new walls to force the enemy ship to lay new tiles for you.

There are also switches which affect some part of the platform you are currently on. Unfortunately they can also be activated by the aliens. It is most distressing when you are about to cross a bridge which has been erected by throwing a switch, to find it suddenly disappear because some inconsiderate alien ship

has run over the same switch.

The first few levels of *Snare* are not that taxing, but you will soon find that quite a bit of lateral thinking is required if you are to progress. The arcade style aspect should not be quickly forgotten either. At times you need a pretty dextrous joystick technique to overcome some of the devious obstacles the programmer has put in your way.

If you don't like games that require too



At last! A transporter, but watch out for the alien craft.

much thinking then I can't really recommend this to you. On the other hand, if, like me, you enjoy pitting the old grey matter into play from time to time then this is just your cup of tea. Go ahead and try it — you'll find it frustrating, but I guarantee you'll be back time and time again until you complete it.

● Laurence Scottford

## RELEASE BOX

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## C64 VERSION

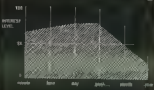
The graphics are really not at all that hot. In fact I'd go as far as to say that they are functional. There could have been improvements here, but fortunately the game is not spoiled too much by this inadequacy. The sound is generally good, and not too obtrusive. Important when you're trying to think on your feet. On the whole *Snare* on the C64 is an enjoyable and very addictive game.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 10

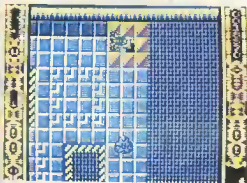
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATING 825

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It will probably have most appeal once you've solved a few levels. If you manage to solve it you are unlikely to go back to it again.



The switch in the corner turns on a useful bridge. The alien turns it off again.

A Time Wa  
production  
for Rainbow  
Arcs

Park, Northampton 10

# CLOWN-O-MANIA

STARBYTE clown about with manic 3D platform fun

**MATTHEW** Smith's well-known and ancient debut, *Manic Miner* was one of those rare games in which simplicity was the key to success. It featured small, but cute sprites, an uninvolved scenario, and straightforward two-dimensional play-screens. It doesn't exactly sound like a recipe for an inspiring game does it?

The game was a runaway success. Highly playable and extremely addictive, it set a precedent for games to come and – together with other classic titles like *Boulderdash* and *PacMan* – helped establish the golden rule that large colourful graphics, megabytes of digitised sound, and highly complicated gameplay are not prerequisites of a great game.

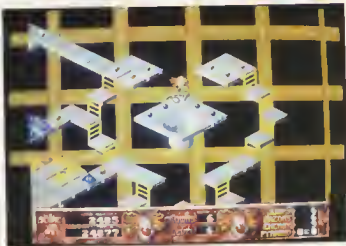
Top marks, therefore, to Starbyte for rejecting current trends towards highly complex scenarios and producing a game which has many of the qualities of *Manic Miner*, and combines them with another great classic in the same vein – *Pacman* – bringing both concepts up to date.

In *Clown-O-Mania* you play Beppo, a circus clown. One day he discovers a map showing the way to a 'land of many crystals', and decides to give up clowning for ever to go in search of them. Simple, eh?

The actual land Beppo finds is made up of a series of three-dimensional platforms on which are arrayed small round crystals (worth a measly 1 point each) and more exotic angular crystals (worth a handsome 10 points each). These Beppo must collect in *PacMan* style as quickly as possible. There are also rowing nasties of varying shape, colour, and deadliness to contend with.

Movement is achieved using the joystick (which actually takes a little getting used to because of the angle of the platform). To get between levels Beppo must use little yellow ladders. Occasionally there are tunnels which he can fall into to descend to a much lower platform or Trampolines and Volcanoes which can be used to reach higher ones. The only other means of transport over large distances are beamers. These are little square teleport pads which can more often than not prove to be extremely frustrating.

Just in case you think that all you are getting here is a souped up 3D *Pacman* variant, I ought to say at this juncture that there is plenty of thinking involved as well, especially on later levels. For example, you will discover squares which change colour as you walk over them. If you manage to complete the level leaving all of the squares the same colour you will earn a massive 10,000 point bonus. That's not as easy as it sounds. As the levels become harder you will frequently find that you 'pant yourself into a corner' as it were, and have to undo all your careful work to get yourself out again.



Clown-o-mania: reestablishing the art of the simple game?

As if colouring squares wasn't enough, you will also have to master the use of pyramids. These come in two forms: Blue pyramids, when dropped, become obstacles which prevent the movement of any nasties that try to cross them, so you can use them to fence monsters in. While pyramids, on the other hand, will destroy any creatures that come into contact with them.

There are many goodies to be had to help you on your way. Clown masks will give you extra lives, Razor Blades can be collected and fired at the nasties, and Jumps can be collected which allow you to leap over gaps. The latter two shoot round the screen at a rapid rate, so collecting them is not that easy.

Once you get further into *Clown-O-Mania* you will also begin to encounter other interesting features like one-way tiles, speed-up tiles and other similar items, all of which must be taken into account as you plan your completion of each level. You will find that you whizz through the first few levels quite quickly, but don't worry – there are severity of them and they get tricky very quickly.

If you enjoy puzzles combined with fast action then *Clown-O-Mania* is most certainly recommended. It's very easy to get into, but should still provide a long-lasting challenge. Smooth multi-directional scrolling, colourful, well-animated sprites, and pleasant background ditties all go to make up a very polished and entertaining game.

© Laurence Scotland

## AMIGA VERSION

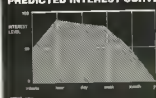
A very competent looking game. It isn't exactly training this machine, but it plays well. Good use is made of a set of scrolling horizontal and vertical bars in the background to give a sense of great depth. Nice bonus too.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 7  
AUDIO 7 FUN FACTOR 8  
**ACE RATING 8DS**

## RELEASE BOX

AMIGA £19.99 ck OUT NOW  
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## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Quite a challenge, but once you've solved it you are unlikely to come back for more.

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# Midwinter

It's nearly five years since Mike Singleton launched *Lords of Midnight* upon an unsuspecting games world. The program offered a whole new dimension of games-playing experience by combining strategy with the revolutionary 'landscape' technique. 250,000 troops, lots of player characters to recruit, and thousands of graphic locations made it a true record-breaker.

Unfortunately none of Mike's later games really lived up to the promise of LQM. Although *Doomdark's Revenge* and other titles were impressive, they lacked the magic combination of simplicity, immediate appeal, and strategic interest that made LQM a winner. The long wait for a true successor to *Lords of Midnight* may now be over.

The scenario for *Midwinter* is simple but compelling. Just as the world gets used to global warming and is casting around for a solution to the problems of the rising sea-levels, along comes a massive meteorite that blasts into the jungles of Burma with the force of a 10,000 megaton bomb. Dust and debris are hurled into the atmosphere, cutting off the sun's rays and leading to a rapid cooling of the earth's temperature. And if that wasn't bad enough, a second natural catastrophe (volcanic explosions caused by an earthquake in Central America) compounds the situation. Earth temperatures plummet to -25 degrees and *Midwinter* has set in.

One of the first attractions of the game is the detailed research that has been put into the scenario. It may sound horrific, but every element has been closely vetted by experts at the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia, one of the world's main sources of expertise in this subject. Whichever bit of the scenario you try to knock, the result is a solid chunk of authority and not the hollow ring of fiction. Which makes playing the game far more compelling.

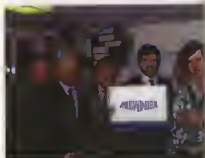
Set on the island of *Midwinter* the plot is simple but effective. *Midwinter* is a 400-mile long landmass formed by falling sea-levels. Authenticity is the keynote again: the topography of the island was fixed after the game design team checked out Admiralty charts for the Azores area.

In the new Ice Age, *Midwinter* offers salvation to a small group of pioneers who, by establishing heat mines (authenticity again: the designs were taken from similar establishments in Iceland), have created a more hospitable environment. After a generation of successful colonisation the islanders awake one morning to discover they have lost contact with their colleagues living in the southern-most parts of *Midwinter*. Someone, it seems, is intent on seizing their island sanctuary and, in doing so, condemning them to death from cold and starvation.

## GOLD WAR

The scenario of the game from this point on combines strategy and action in a manner very similar to *Lords of Midnight*. Just as in that game you were attempting to halt the advance of *Doomdark's* forces either by destroying them or by penetrating *Doomdark's* stronghold, so in *Midwinter* you must prevent the heat

2000 troops,  
32 player characters,  
10000 control points...  
Microprose/Rainbird  
prepare to launch Mike  
Singleton's latest  
blockbuster.



The *Midwinter* team: (l-r) Martin Math, Paul Hubbard, Rob Davies, Peter Jones, Hugh Betterbury, and Mike Singleton.

mines from falling into enemy hands, recruit allies from amongst the other islanders, and force either a military or strategic victory. Whatever happens, you have to destroy the enemy camp at the south of the island. If all the heat-mines are captured, you lose.

The similarities to *Lords of Midnight*, however, are soon forgotten when you start playing. Unlike LQM you have a full-scale 3D fractal generated landscape to travel over. Furthermore there are three different ways of travelling (sking, ice-buggy, or hang-glider) and each has certain tactical implications in terms of speed, vulnerability, and the ability to access certain parts of the island.

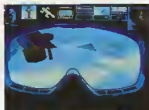
Strategy is more dominant in *Midwinter* too, since the program offers very comprehensive mapping functions that enable you to track enemy movements and generate battle plans on a large scale. Information on the current status of the struggle is therefore easily available at any time.

You have to recruit up to 32 allies in the struggle against the invaders. Here again there have been considerable advances over the early Singleton titles. Each character has a complex profile and history that makes relationships vital in establishing alliances. This all adds to the strategic element, together with your characters' differing skills in a wide range of areas.

The graphic display of the game is superb. *Midwinter* makes clever use of a limited palette to display a detailed fractal landscape that scrolls very rapidly in all directions. Land contours are all faithfully imple-

## ON YER SNOW BIKE!

There are four principal means of transport in *Midwinter*, each with a corresponding view of the surrounding landscape.

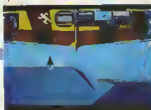


▲ Your ski-goggles...



▲ This is the view from your buggy cabin: buggies are fast and secure, but there are some places they can't reach. Much used by the opposition.

Hang-gliding is THE way to travel, always provided you can find a thermal updraft. Here you're off over the cliffs. Note the 'misty horizon'...



mented, so that if you follow an enemy snow buggy you can see its tail rise and fall as it negotiates the icy slopes. Ski too fast down one hill, and you could come to grief if there's a steep slope up the other side of the valley. Topography plays an essential role in the strategy of the game, its implications ranging from simple ambush techniques to the feasibility of hang-gliding from one cliff-top to another. Even the thermals are linked, as in real life, to the terrain below.

Gameplay is quick and easy, driven by a selection of attractive icons that enable you to move between various command modes. Once in control of a character you can perform actions as driven either from the movement or decision screens. You can swap characters at any time, wherever they may be, provided you have previously recruited them—you start with just one and must make friends quickly to survive. The game has that classic combination of simplicity and depth that could well make it a winner.

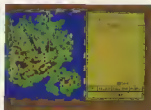
#### GAME OF THE YEAR?

Microprose have gone through several major changes recently. After first acquiring the three Teleconsole labels, and marketing the incentive games, they even stretched to forming two new labels of their own, Microstyle and Microslates. After learning a few tough lessons, the company have now settled down and are planning a new Advanced Computer Entertainment strategy. Fewer games, more time and money spent on development, and hopefully what we'll miss in terms of quantity will be made up by quality.

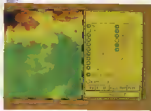
Since releases like M1 Tank Platoon and Gunship were scarcely negligible achievements, it's difficult to see exactly how much more resources Microprose

## MAPPA MUNDI

The map screens in *Midwinter* are especially impressive. The display is built around a 20 million triangle, fractal generated landscape. A button press enables you to select different displays, pinpointing characters, heat mines, and other game elements.



▲ Here you are at full zoom-out, with the character current location option selected.



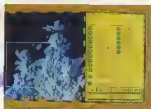
▲ You can zoom in and use buttons to select different features.

## MIDWINTER TECHNO-PORN

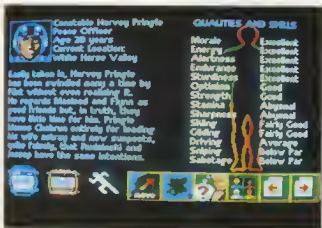
**Map:** dual display (satellite view/light-source shading) and topographical  
10000 control points  
fractal generated, equivalent to 40Mbytes of data  
20 million triangles of graphic display  
3000 unique place names  
400 miles of playing area at game level

**Characters:** 32 player characters  
14 attributes and skills  
2000 invading troops

**Display:** Up to two mile view  
Up to 400 triangles per frame  
Buildings have up to 30 faces



▲ You can select light-source shading (on, useful for planning tactical manoeuvres).



▲ Complex character attribute screens are backed up by comprehensive details in the manual. You have to take careful note of who's who and what their particular likes and dislikes are as these factors affect recruitment and tactics.



▲ This is the view through your sniper scope. You've got an enemy hoggy in your sights. They hoh up and down convincingly as they negotiate the terrain.



▲ Down in this 'real' world, some of the features are fairly complex. Here you are outside a village; that's a heat mine on the left.

can put into a game (Tank, for example, had a manual that weighed in like a coffee table book) and still make a profit. 'We're relying entirely on the quality of the product,' answered marketing director Peter Jones. This game is far and away the biggest project we have ever undertaken. It's arguably the largest project ever undertaken for a home computer. We genuinely believe it's the beginning of a whole new generation of computer software.

Hehmm. We've heard some of this before, we think! But however sceptical you may be about the claims, you can't argue with the facts. We've already sat down and delved into the world of *Midwinter* and we reckon it just might be THE big game of 1990. Naturally we're reserving final judgement until we've carried out more in-depth play-testing: watch out for the definitive ACE verdict next month...

## THE MISSION IS VITAL – THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

### F15 Strike Eagle II

F15 Strike Eagle II is a whole new concept in computer air warfare. Dogfighting is the name of the game. The air swarms with enemy aircraft. Dice with death as you light your burners and head for the skies. Success depends on making the right moves – fast. Super-smooth, non-stop action takes place over 250,000 square miles of authentic terrain. Superb, solid-filled polygon based 3D graphics makes it feel as though you really are in the thick of the action. Hundreds of options, four difficulty levels and a vast amount of missions and scenarios make F15 Strike Eagle II perfect for dogfighting veteran and novices alike.

### F-19 Stealth Fighter

MicroProse's F-19 Stealth Fighter transports you into the real world of Stealth Technology. Placed in charge of one of the USA's most valuable and secret aircraft, you must carry out missions deemed too dangerous for normal aircraft to accomplish. Amazing three-dimensional graphics add a totally new dimension to F-19 Stealth Fighter as you fly undetected, at 75 feet around Berlin and strike deep within Communist territory. F-19 is not just a flight simulator – it's an experience!



### Gunship

Gunship is one of the truly great combat flight simulations ever. In the AH-64 Apache, one of the most advanced attack helicopters in the world, and developed with the help of real attack helicopter pilots, Gunship lets you loose on a high performance helicopter that can fly low and slow, hover, wrap, fly backwards, rotate and go into a full blooded, 200 knot power dive. It's the most realistic combat game in the world. It's the only one that matters more than the others. It's the only one that matters more than the others. It's the only one that matters more than the others.

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# WHAT'S THE SCORE?

MicroProse's action games feature a depth of realism, excitement and strategy rarely seen before in computer entertainment.

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## SCORE TO SETTLE

Airborne Ranger's fast-paced action challenges your skills and reflexes over a dozen missions deep behind enemy lines.



## WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Soccer was the world's first true football simulation – from indoor league to World Cup Final, it's just like the real thing;



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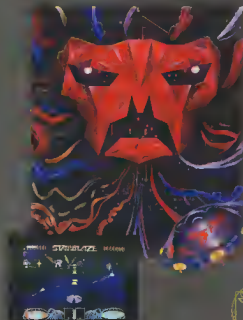
## BAD COMPANY...

**Y**ou've fallen into Bad Company. In this place there are no good guys, just you, your sidekick and wave upon wave of insectoid enemies who have just one thing in mind - the total destruction of every human they set their nasty little bug eyes on. No quarter is asked and none is given, you know what to do - if it's alien, blast it!

Bad Company is programming legend Steve Bak's latest and greatest masterwork with scrolling of vanishing point perspective surfaces, the latest superfast 3D sprite techniques and featuring:

- Simultaneous two-player option
- Unique choice of weaponry, with fire power boosters
- Choice of eight different combat heroes
- Uncountable waves of sickening insectoid attack

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ATARI ST SCREEN SHOT



ATARI ST SCREEN SHOT

## STAR-BLAZE...

**S**tarBlaze is pure solid vector 3D Shoot 'em up from the programmers that brought you 16 bit Elite! To qualify as a Tarnisian warrior in an intergalactic war of unparalleled ferocity, you must prove your prowess by taking on scores of Rendish alien attack waves and live to tell the tale. How will you do it? With quick reactions and the fastest trigger finger on the planet!

StarBlaze is a game which draws upon the strangest features of the classic arcade titles to introduce a wholly original style of game to the arcade genre, featuring:

- Over a hundred different attack patterns
- Action-packed gameplay in stunning solid 3D
- Five colourful backdrops (forget boring starfields)
- Shield, smart bomb and extra power pickups

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# KEEP THE THIEF



**E**very adventurer worth his or her salt makes good use of the TAKE or GET command – but *Keep the Thief* puts a rather different slant on this innocuous pastime. Rather than allow you to wander round the world blithely looting shops and houses with the owners simply turning a blind eye, the game takes a rather more realistic view of theft. Get caught TAKEing anything in the city of Tel Mercon and it's curtains.

You take the title role, in permanent exile from your home town for persistent anti-social behaviour. Your new hunting ground is the Tri-City area and the city of Tel Mercon in particular, where once the evil God-King Teluc held sway. Here, rich pickings are on offer for the successful thief, but Keef has much to learn in order to survive, let alone become the new God-King which is your ultimate objective. Since rumour has it that the all-powerful Teluc – banished by peasant revolt – is still alive somewhere in the land, it's questionable whether this objective is entirely level-headed.

Starting in the jungle near the city, your first necessity is to equip yourself with weapons and armour to give you a fighting chance of survival. Unfortunately such items are expensive so you'll either have to steal them from under the nose of the smith or look around for valuables which are less well guarded elsewhere.

The streets of Tel Mercon contain some pretty wealthy households who often leave valuables lying in full view and apparently unguarded. However some citizens are rather less trusting than their fellows and use a variety of subtle traps to protect their goods from the likes of you. Armed guards on patrol are a further hazard, so you might try your luck in the jungle instead, where the pickings are not so

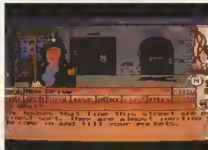
rich but the monsters and outlaws there generally carry some personal wealth, and even, occasionally, useful items of weaponry and armour.

The screen display is divided into several sections. The top half shows either a still graphic of your location, a 3D representation of the combat area, your spell mixing cloth and ingredients, and a direction indicator.

During combat an overhead view of the combat area is shown as a small scale map supported by a radar like display of your direction of view. Below this is a long narrow panel in which any trees or monsters are shown in 3D perspective.

Below the main display is the heart of the control system. A set of boxes show currently available command words. Clicking on these either implements the command or calls up a further sub-menu. The system is very easy to use and quick to learn.

In addition to icons, many housekeeping functions are available on the menu bar including options to reduce the numbers and nasti-



ness of random monster encounters – very useful while finding your feet. Several status displays are also available from the menus. Your abilities in stealing and disarming traps are shown as both percentages and partially filled bars as are general attributes such as strength, hit points and magic points. You can also monitor current levels of sleepiness, hunger and drunkenness. All the displays are clear and easy to read and instantly accessible at any time.

All good fantasy worlds cater for magic and this is no exception. Spells are created by

mixing ingredients on your spell cloth and include such gems as Banders Aides for healing and Flickus Bickus for light. To mix spells you need to own the appropriate spellbook of which there are several to find, then decipher the cryptic clues given to decide which reagents are needed. While many common reagents are available at the herb shop, more exotic numbers can involve a long and dangerous trek to acquire.

Combat takes place in real time and requires both tactics and fast reactions at times. Both ranged and close quarter weapons can be used as may some spells if already prepared. But be warned, once in combat the battle is to the death, usually yours, so save often as ambushes are frequent.

*Keep the Thief* is a well crafted RPG which should offer hours of exploration and discovery. The whole game is shot through with humour, often in the form of insults and put downs, which help to liven and maintain a very enjoyable atmosphere. Its style is a nicely welded combination of traditional adventure and character building with plenty of flexibility to explore and try out ideas.

## LANDSCAPE 80

Clear, colourful graphics, somewhat spotty by present movement techniques. Dungeons are rather sparsely drawn and not up to the standard of other landscapes.

## ENCOUNTERS... 75

Leads of non-hostile characters against whom you can pit your wits and skill, although conversation is limited to set responses.

## CHALLENGE... 85

While not too difficult to play, the sheer range of options to be considered simply in solving hell provides hours of enjoyable play.

## SYSTEM 80

Very easy to install, but changes of equipment style

## ACE RATING 850

*Keep the Thief* offers a fresh and original approach to the genre. Likely to appeal to both RPG and text/graphic addicts it provides a lasting challenge for experienced and novice players alike – and it's hilarious!

# MYSTERY OF THE MUMMY

The year is 1912, the place Hamburg in this new adventure from Rainbow Arts. Programmed by Time Warp, the game casts you as a lawyer who, together with his driver/companion Wilhelm, is approached by local resident Rudolf Rabensberg.

It seems a mummy belonging to Mr Rabensberg's father was stolen from an exhibition several years ago and never recovered. Now news has reached his son that an important African mummy is to be put up for auction. Your task is to discover whether the two mummies are in fact one and the same. As a typical jetsetter of the era, you are due in Munich on Thursday and today is Sunday - your time is therefore limited.

The screen display is divided into sections which show a clock with the current time, a short text description of your location and conversations with other people, a set of icons for



controlling the game, a picture of your location and four bars showing your level of money, hunger, thirst and tiredness. Input is a mixture of mouse/icon and typing (addresses, names etc).

A quick glimpse at a new detective-style graphic adventure from RAINBOW ARTS. In the style of some of the recent French mysteries (*Mortville Manor*, for example) you explore Hamburg in a search for a missing mummy...

Gameplay consists initially of exploring the town by visiting various addresses and asking people you meet about other people. With well over a hundred characters the permutations are mind-boggling. The game also includes several action sequences which range from salvaging exhibits from the bottom of a lake to messing about in a forensic laboratory with chemicals bought from the local chemist.

To aid you in your task you are provided with a map of Hamburg showing 186 numbered places and a telephone/address book listing the residents, theatres, hospitals etc. From your hotel room you are able to contact many people by telephone, while others may be visited

either on foot or by car.

Since I haven't got very far into the game yet I'm reluctant to give this one the benefit of a full rating. Stand by for more details next month.

# DRAGONS OF FLAME

US GOLD continue the *Heroes of the Lance* saga but tone down the hack'n'slay elements.

Remember *Heroes of the Lance*? Did you manage to recover the Disks of Mishkel from Khisanth (the guardian)? If so, you'll enjoy this follow-up in the Dragonance series.

Draconian forces have spread out across the face of Kryon with only the Quainest elves still holding out. Although the elves will fall the Companions still have a chance to free the slaves of Pax Tharkas and recover the long-lost Wyrmslayer. The Companions must run the gamut of swarming Draconian forces to succeed.

Play takes place in the open initially with the party seen from overhead as they move about the countryside. However the Draconian forces are everywhere and battle is joined from the first moments of the game.

As combat becomes imminent the overhead view changes to the more familiar side-on shot as used in *Heroes*. Fighting is a matter of aiming low, middle or high at the enemy or casting ranged weapons such as spears from a safe distance. If you're anything like me you'll find yourself frantically waggling the joystick anywhere just to stay alive! Following combat the press of a key returns the screen to an overhead view.

All your characters are shown in cameo at

the bottom of the screen together with a compass pointer on the left. Accessing commands is achieved by pressing the space bar to bring up the main menu. From here various actions can be selected such as spell casting, changing the marching order, manipulating objects, saving/loading etc. Also available is a command to show a map of the whole area of the quest in case you get lost.

Pax Tharkas is made up of several levels containing a variety of secret doors and traps and is very similar to *Heroes* visually with your character shown side-on against the background scenery of walls, doors, passages etc.

The displays an improvement however. Bright primary colours make identifying objects and characters much easier and quicker which in turn makes the game more friendly than its predecessor.

While *Heroes of the Lance* had too much of the hack & slay and too few strategic elements for my liking, *Dragons of Flame* seems to have a far better balance, therefore appealing to a wider range of adventure tastes. Although basically an arcade adventure, the game contains enough puzzle elements to satisfy most followers of the fantasy genre.



Colours in *Dragons of Flame* are much less muddy than they were in *Heroes* and easier on the eye to boot.



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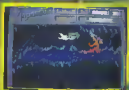
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the Fabled City of Atlantis.  
Surmount the perils of the deep  
with a clever strategy and slick  
joystick control... the underwater  
world could be yours.



Scenes shots from  
various screens.



Mentall in domain

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### JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH



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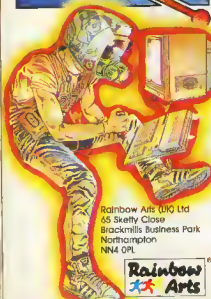
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# TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

FEELING LOST? TNT GETS THOSE TRICKY GAMES MAPPED OUT

## TV Sports Football

If you enjoyed this game as much as I did then by now you are probably at the stage where you want to improve your playing skills. These 16 gems from M.Ohooper of Belvedere, Kent might prove helpful in doing so

1. Fake Punts are the best to use.
2. Don't run with your quarterback
3. Always pass the ball at the earliest opportunity
4. Passing to the left is generally better than to the right
5. Make sure the ball is thrown in front of the halfback
6. Don't make long passes as there is probably a member of the opposition further up the pitch
7. Run along the edges.
8. Try not to pass into the end zone. Try to run the ball in.
9. Run straight ahead and go diagonally when there is someone running in front or behind you.
10. If you don't do well on your first three downs go for a field goal instead of making a risky throw/run.
11. Field goals have more chance of going in from the 40 yard line
12. Never go for the punt
13. In defence use blitzes as often as possible.
14. Use Time-Outs only when you are losing
15. Use the 4-3 alignment rather than the 6-1.
16. Use the pro-set formation rather than the Y formation and the shotgun.

## The Darker Side of Freescape

Liam Hughes of Romford, Essex has strolled through Dark Side from incentive, and here gives us the benefit of his insight into the game.

Start by destroying ECDs 1-5. Now go to the Regulus. Go into the building that is in front of you when you are facing North. In here you will see fuel rods and shield blocks. Collect all of these

Now destroy ECDs 5-9. This will give you quite a lot of time. Now go through either Umbriel or Procyon. Walk by the prison sensor until you get thrown in prison.



## More C64 Pokes Galore

Never let it be said that ACE ignores C64 owners. After a whole TNT column to themselves in November, C64 fanatics can celebrate the new year with yet more gems. This time they're from Ace hacker and cracker Koen Smedis, Leuven, Belgium. Thanks a million Koen.

### XIS (unlimited lives)

POKE 16956,173  
SYS 28672 (to restart)

### LEONARDO (passwords)

Moonwalk  
Football  
Blitzer

### GEMINI WING

(infinite lives)  
POKE 4518,173  
SYS 4096 (to restart)

### (passwords)

Mr.Wimpy (level 2)  
Classics (level 3)  
Whizzkid (level 4)  
Gunshot (level 5)  
Doozguys (level 6)  
D.Gibson (level 7)



### MR. HELI (passwords)

CANHBEAMJLJJCCKBT  
(LEVEL 2)  
DAAJDFIAAMJLJJDCKWC  
(LEVEL 3)

It's simple for Leonardo to do a little Moonwalking, with ACE a recipe for an easy game

### FIRST STRIKE

(infinite lives)  
POKE 38316,173  
SYS 2051 (to restart)

### RICK DANGEROUS

POKE 2793,173 (infinite lives)  
POKE 11193,173 (infinite dynamite)  
POKE 10886,173 (infinite bullets)  
SYS 24480 (to restart)



### KING OF THE BEACH

(passwords)  
Sideout (level 2, Chicago)  
Gekko (level 3, Hawaii)  
Toplite (level 4, Rio)  
Sundevi (level 5, Sydney)

### (Try these for other tx)

Logic on  
Logic off  
Cheat on  
Cheat off  
Eat me  
Drink me

### (Basic tips)

- \*always play with stajohn
- \*smash after the reception
- \*when playing on the left side, set up in the upper corner
- \*on the right side set up in the lower corner
- \*play it a lot!
- \*look at all the girls after 3 rounds!

When inside collect the Telepod Cristal, then get out. You do this by shooting into the boxes, you will either be giving up fuel or shield. Soon the door will open. When you have exited the prison you will be in the tunnels. When you have got out of the tunnels, go and destroy ECDs 9-15.

Now go to Sinus, enter the building in the West. You do this by shooting the block above the door about 10-15 times. When inside Jet-Pac up to the top, here you will see two fuel rods, and two shield blocks, and a Telepod Cristal.

From here go to Iapetus, get into the building East of the river. To do this you have to Jet-Pac over a force field, then get into the building. In it you will find four tele-transponders. Now go and destroy ECDs 15-20. Go to Tethys and collect the four fuel rods.

Now you can get the other 13rd Telepod Cristal. Destroy ECDs 20-24. Go to Psyche and go into the Telepod and shoot the cristal that takes you to Polux. Here you will find the final Telepod Cristal. Use this to take you to the NEREIDOL sector. Take the letter K, then go back to Psyche, and go

through the open gate. Destroy the final ECD and the game is complete.

## CPC Gapers

Right, C64 owners have had their turn, now it's time for some juicy morsels digestible by Amstrad addicts. These tips, once again, come from Liam Hughes of Romford, Essex.

### ROAD RUNNER - KIXX

On the selection screen type US for infinite lives

115



red devil will also come to you. Dispatch this with a pinch. When you get to the other side of the platform, get the key and go back across and down. Now go to the right, and kill the snail, then go right and down the ladder. Blue devils should begin to fall from above. Stand in front of the portal at which they fall and pinch them. Now jump quickly past the snakes (if you have enough energy left it may be easier to run through them all).

You should now come to some owl heads. When the first of these goes up, run for it and continue running through the devil (inevitable). Go down to the slug and jump it and then fall down. Continue running and kill the bee as before. Now punch the skulls one by one until you reach another poison which you should collect. Go down the ladder and jump the worm. Continue down and then run along and a large bee will fly above and drop fire bombs. Stand in between the bombs and jump the fireball.

Now move down avoiding the crawler. Go left and kill the ghost, and then go up and collect the power punch which you will take damage from while collecting (unless you have previously pulled the lever which shuts off the electric field around



it). Now go down and right and avoid the thrusters. Continue right until you reach the worms. Get as close to each one as possible, and when it goes, run up to the dragon and crouch, then punch like hell. When it dies, quickly run into the well and climb out into daylight.

At ground level go east punching everything until you get to the castle. Before you go inside, collect the light so you can see. Once inside retrieve the tool then make your way down to collect the laser gun. Now disable the field with the tool in order to proceed, killing the monster and collecting the jet pack.

On level two just blast everything. On the final level punch everything, and kill the giant at the end to finish.

OK, you're saying, that makes it easier, but it's still flippin' difficult! I agree, and so does Greg Stone of Chesterfield, Derbyshire. So to help out those players who are still dying after five minutes' play and long to see more of the great graphics in the game, here is his cheat for infinite energy:

When the loading screen with the picture of the beast appears, press and hold down the fire button on the joystick and the left mouse button, until prompted to insert disk two. Now proceed as normal and you will have infinite energy.

#### AFTER BURNER - ACTIVISION

Levels 1-10 are easy, so try to gain as many bonus lives as possible for later levels. Concentrate on shooting planes down as missiles are easy to dodge.

Levels 11-18 are slightly more difficult, still try to shoot planes down rather than worrying about dodging missiles.

Levels 19-22 are difficult. You will lose some lives. Stop shooting planes and start dodging the missiles. To do this, move up and down. Don't try and pick up any rhythm as the missiles are not fired in a set sequence. If you try to shoot your forward vision will be obscured and you are more likely to get shot down.

On all levels except 8 and 17 go at maximum speed. Levels 5, 13, and 23 are just landing and refueling except 23 where you have completed the game.

#### OPERATION WOLF - ACTIVISION

Level 1 is simple - just keep your cross-hair in the middle and occasionally move up, and of course down for supplies.

Level 2 is the same as level 1 except you should go up a lot more for the paratroopers. Level 3 is the same as level 1 except that you should not worry about health too much because the villagers will replenish it. Use a grenade when there are too many men.

Level 4 is as level 1 except you do not need to worry about ammo as the ammo factory is your target. Helicopters are a real problem here.

Level 5 is as level 1 except you should shoot permanently at some points.

Level 6 requires you to kill 100 men, so with little time, fire everywhere, and try to use all your grenades over the first half of a level. There are many grenades to pick up.

## Forgotten Worlds

This one comes from Urian Khan of Coventry, West Midlands, and is a solution to the first three levels.

#### Level 1

Collect as many Zennies (currency) as you can. Blast your way through aliens in a straightforward manner. (Don't try and shoot the first lot of ground based aliens). Go to the shop. Buy everything on sale. Once you are out of the shop, try and kill the spider-like rocket aliens (they inflict most damage). When you're near the end of the level, guide your man through the gate to the dem-

god before they close temporarily. Now guide your man to the bottom right-hand corner as fast as possible and the dem-god will die automatically.

#### Level 2

Kill the lizards and other aliens with your v-cannon. Buy first aid etc from shop (don't buy multi-directional fire). To avoid giant snakes, stay as close to the top of the screen as possible. To destroy gun-turrets, stay at the bottom of the screen and shoot across (your v-cannon will protect you from their shots). To kill the first dragon, position your man directly above the dragon's heart and make him face towards the bottom left hand corner, and keep shooting. The dragon will die (your v-cannon will kill the lizards.)

#### Level 3

Kill the aliens in a straightforward manner. Go to the shop. Buy the necessary equipment. (Don't buy laser cannon). When a star ship pod building appears. Guide your man to the bottom right corner, face the top right corner and keep shooting. Once you have reached the top, reposition your man at the bottom of the screen and no shots will launch you.

Once you enter the three gates to the god of war, position your man at the bottom left corner, facing up. The arms of the god will not touch you now.



When you reach the head, move a little to the right and fire up at his shoulder. When it blows up, move to the other side and do the same with the right shoulder until that blows too. Now make your man face to the top left corner and move a little to the left. Now shoot his nose until he dies. All this takes a little practise.

#### Level 4

Sorry, but you're on your own for this one!



# Megatips for a Megablast

Khalid F Howlader has sent in this complete guide to the Bitmap Brother's first rate shoot-em-up, Xenon II. No excuse now - get reading and then get zapping.

First a note on joysticks. I have a Zipstick and a quickshot turbo, both of which have excellent auto-fire options. If your joystick doesn't have this then buy one as soon as it becomes available (shop 1). It really comes in handy when your trigger finger gets sore.

## Xenon II Shop Table

What to buy and what to sell

SHOP #	SELL	BUY
1	(nothing)	Health (and at all ambiquent shops)
2	Rear	Double-shot Shotgun x 2
3	-	-
4	-	Cannon Powerup x 1
5	-	-
6	-	Laser Powerup x 1
7	-	-
8	-	Laser Powerup Life (if you need it)
9	-	Life (if you need it)

This table shows the items I bought to complete the game, but at shop 8 you may want to try out some new weapons.

**Homing Missiles** - no point in getting these as they are given away free just before the halfway badge (level 5).

**Bombs** - very effective, but if you already have side shots you will have no room to carry them. If you want to try these out then sell side and buy rear.

**Protection** - makes your shield last longer. I prefer a life instead.

**Drone** - quite good, but better when powered up.

**Dive** - useful for getting out of sticky situations.

**Laser** - the best weapon when power is 3. Tears through everything in its way.

**Bitmap Staples** - if you want a surprise, this is the thing to get.

**Mines** - these are effective if you can remember the positions of the waves, as a well laid stream can

obliterate a complete wave.

**Electro Ball** - useful in the rock passage (level 3) for destroying serpents behind you. Sometimes it disappears. In my experience it was usually in a corner of the screen or not on it at all. Bring it back by keeping the fire button down and moving the joystick. If this doesn't work then the ball has expired.

**Flamer** - this isn't really effective with auto-fire on because the fire button needs to be constantly pressed to give a continuous stream. Limited range.

**Health** - Unless you are less than three quarters full don't get it, except on level 4 where there's no free health.



## Level 2

- Go up and shoot the eye.
- Go along the top.
- Shoot the other eye.
- Go down and shoot the last eye.



## Guardians

### Level 1 - Shellfish

Shoot it in the eye.

### Level 2 (see diagrams)

### Level 3 (0.5) - Crab

Shoot its eyes. To avoid it, move in a rough figure of 8 pattern. Watch out for those extendable claws.

### Level 3 (1.0) - Serpent

At this point you should have at least 2 heavy weapons on the sides. Position yourself outside of the bottom-left exit and as he emerges, keep your firepower trained on his head as he moves across. He should then blow up leaving loads of money.

### Level 4 (0.5) - Dragon

As it appears, go right to the side and advance upwards. Your side shot should finish off those small heads. Then hit the bit at the very end and go down, but don't stay at the bottom. Wait until the dragon's head is in view. Just after he has lunged, go right to the bottom and let him have it where it hurts (no, his head, stupid).

### Level 4 (1.0) - Chameleon

Just advance up the side and dispose of his eyes. Now push your self forward next to his feet and you can get the body with the side shot as well. This saves having to dodge the tongue.

### Level 5 (0.5) - Tank

Pick up the homing missile while destroying the turrets. Now position your laser dead centre so you can blast the tank without getting hit by its own laser.

### Level 5 (1.0) - Battlecruiser

If you haven't got a power 3 side shot then you've got no chance matey. First shoot the engines until they stop. Now polish off both turrets. Advance on the side destroying the turrets. Watch out for little spaceships hitting you from behind. Destroy the lasers and then go down. Pump the ship's rear full of bullets and enjoy the ending.

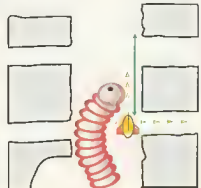
## Level 2

- Circle around the island destroying bridges.
- Make sure that when you are shooting the spider you are as far away as possible in front of it. Otherwise you will be slightly jammed against the island and all the money will go streaming by.

## Level 3

### Rock Passage

- When gap appears reverse and let rip with side shot.





# TINTIN ON THE MOON



"Hello control station! Here is the moon rocket. Tintin speaking. I have just regained consciousness. Everything seems OK, we are now taking over the controls of the rocket." Aboard the rocket, you will relive with Tintin and his friends the most exciting adventure the world has ever known. The first trip to the Moon!

Will you succeed in piloting the red and white rocket through space and achieve a flawless landing? Will you capture Calanel Baris, the traitor, who wants to make the expedition fail? Will you be able to find the extinguishers to put out the fires, even while floating in zero-gravity (which isn't everybody's idea of fun)? Will you succeed in finding and disarming the bombs and freeing your companions in order to get out of the rocket to make the first step on the Moon? You will discover all this by playing "TINTIN ON THE MOON", the first computer game based on the comic books by Hergé...

Before Armstrong there was Tintin and... may be you!



Available on: AMIGA, AMSTRAD, ATARI ST, SPECTRUM, C64, IBM PC.

INFOGRADES



Mitre House - Abbey Road - Enfield Middx - EN2 8PQ - Tel: (011) 76 40 123



The console crackin' team are back again. Jojo Cicero and Mark Hook of Cardiff, South Glamorgan are back again with more amazing tips - this time we have the maps for rounds 1-9 of Spy vs. Spy on the Sega.

round 1



round 2



round 3



round 4



round 9



round 5



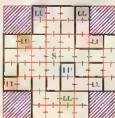
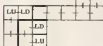
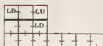
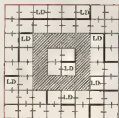
round 6



round 8



round 7



#### KEY

- LU Ladder Up
- LD Ladder Down
- DoorConnection
- S Start

CORNER

CONSOLE





# BATTLETECHnology

ACE reveals the  
story, specs  
and sensation of  
31st Century  
gaming...



Each cockpit is equipped with a 25" colour monitor, which serves as a front window to the vehicle and displays graphics of the surrounding environment and the ensuing battle. The secondary screen is used for radar and vehicle status. Dual joysticks with trigger buttons, weapon selection displays, throttle control, directional pedals, calling message centre, radio controls for communication with team-mates and attendant and other interior battle functions all add to the realism of the battle.

**I**magine not only playing a computer game but actually experiencing it: that's the underlying ideal behind ESP Corporation's BattleTech Centre - a simulation experience far more advanced than any other system available to the general public and one of the most exciting games prospects to hit the market in years.

Jordan Weisman, designer of BattleTech Centre and founder of ESP Corporation, told ACE: "We have created a whole new entertainment medium - the world's first complete computer simulation experience for play".

## INTERACTIVE STAR WARS

Weisman, a 29-year-old dyslexic, originally had the concept for BattleTech Centre ten years ago. The central idea behind BattleTech Centre was to bring the movie magic made popular by Star Wars to a place where people could actually participate in the total environment of a fantasy world. So Weisman and friend L. Ross Babcock III formed FASA in 1980, with the hope of raising funds to produce the Environmental Simulation Project - but they were greeted with scepticism from potential investors worried about the high risk factor and costs.



**I**nfact, FASA concentrated on creating intensely popular adventure and role-playing board games such as BattleTech, Star Wars Legion and Star Wars. Prompted by the success Weisman and Babcock, they revived the BattleTech Centre concept and started FASA's sister company, ESP Corporation - dedicated to interactive entertainment.

BattleTech Centre takes advantage of cheaper microcomputer technologies: "this gives us the speed and graphic power required without having to

## BattleTech cockpit controls



## BattleTech Specs

Each BattleTech Centre cockpit contains 32Mb of RAM and 26 proprietary PC boards, which make up the graphics, sound and cockpit control systems. The computers communicate with the other cockpits via a local area network. The cockpits main screen can display 200 3D objects in real time using a maximum of 64000 colours on screen at any one time.

The game's visuals are split between two viewing screens, the primary "out the front window" screen and a secondary screen used for radar and other information. ESP designed the primary screen graphics system differently than most military type simulators, which model the universe via a set of polygons requiring incredibly fast maths processors to handle the calculations involved. Instead, BattleTech Centre graphics systems use 19000 "drawn types" images which were originally created on a CAD system and rendered using ray-tracing, shading, source lighting and edge smoothing. The graphics systems also use a fast and versatile geometry engine which performs hardware scaling of the images in real time and views 2D transformations such as mirroring, warping, flips and keyframing.

### Primary screen:

Graphics processor	3AC10 at 40MHz
Theoretical throughput	400 nanoseconds per pixel
Practical throughput	200 "artefact" images in real time
Screen resolution	320x200
Maximum colours onscreen	64000
Total colour palette	15 million colours
System memory	34 Mb of RAM, expandable to 132 Mb
Graphic images in memory	19000
Special geometry engine	Hardware scaling of graphic images and performs 2D transformations

### Secondary screen:

Game and graphics processor	68010 at 7MHz
Screen resolution	320x200
Colours per screen	16
Total colour palette	4096

### Sound system:

Processor	6809
Digital samplers	ADPCM and PCM format
Channels	20
Watts per channel	63
Memory	420K RAM

The sound system incorporates three sound generation devices, giving it the ability to generate spatially orientated sounds from either straight sampled sounds sampled sounds with frequency control or FM synthesised sounds.

### Cockpit controls:

- 2 Eight position joysticks, each containing three firing buttons
- 1 Analog throttle
- 2 Analog foot pedals
- 52 Momentary switches
- 8 Momentary rocker switches
- 115 Tactile levers
- 132 segment LED bargraph
- 128 4 segment LED alpha-numeric display

Each cockpit has close to a hundred controls and over a hundred indicator lights.



As each object is placed on screen, it's assigned a colour palette which consists of 256 colours. Palettes are assigned based on the object type, location and situation. An example of this palette use is distance haze. In the real world, as an object gets further away it tends to blend into the background - the palette system mimics this perfectly.



BattleTech Centre uses a new series of Mech to be introduced to role-players over the next six months. This particular Omni-Mech serves mostly in a fire-support role.



use a huge multi-million mainframe computer," says Mike Hanson, director of BattleTech Centre system development at Incredible Technologies. Weisman adds, "In the past only governments could afford this sort of thing. ESP has found a way to bring the person on the street the same sophisticated imaging of commercial and military flight simulations used by NASA and the Air Force."

### PLAY THE GAME

The BattleTech Centre is an environmental complex which simulates a fictional universe, the core experience being an eight-player battle. Each player sits in an enclosed cockpit, whose simulator allows each contestant to see a graphic image of the other player's vehicle, their movements and the surrounding terrain. The BattleTech Centre operates in a 5000 square foot location, encompassing a lobby area, two combat information systems, embarkation hall and two launch areas.

The lobby area is decorated as a windroom of a giant starship with 10-12 video monitors broadcasting fictitious newscasts from the future, cockpit simulator instructions and "God's Eye View" of games in progress. This, coupled with uniformed staff, surrounds players with sensory cues of a science fiction universe. In the Combat Information Centres, a uniformed officer hands players their sheet of orders and

they are allowed to form team strategies, scope the terrain of their mission and obtain information on the universe via a "user friendly" computer. The launch areas are dominated by eight cockpits (each 10 feet by 3.5 feet by 5 feet).

The simulators are connected via computer network to produce a real-time simulation experience in an interactive, 3D environment. The terrain, vehicles and mission change every game, so each time you play there are new challenges. In addition, for the first time, the opponent you face is not a computer, but another player who thinks ahead, learns from their mistakes, and is unpredictable.

Each BattleTech Centre will have two eight-player games going on simultaneously. The Centre can change its fictional environment every 30 minutes.

The game software and videos are changed and the result is a new universe and vehicle type to master. The first two environments created for BattleTech Centres are based on FASA's BattleTech and Renegade Legion role-playing games. BattleTech is set in the year 3050, where the masters of the battlefield are huge, manlike BattleMechs. Renegade Legion is a game of starfighter combat in the year 6000. ESP will create several other environments in the future.

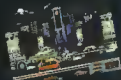
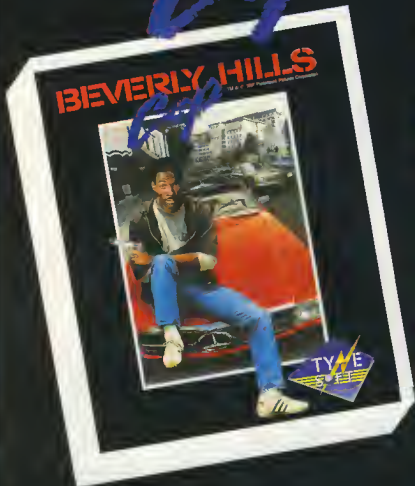
The BattleTech Centre books reservations for teams, or mix and match individuals as they arrive to make up teams for each game sequence. A half-hour experience will be priced on a par with a trip to the cinema or squash-court.

### COMING TO A TOWN NEAR YOU?

ESP plans to develop 150 BattleTech Centres across the United States and Canada, and has a license for distribution in Japan. Each complex will cost approximately \$750,000 to build - \$500K for the electronics package and \$100-\$250K construction cost. The first BattleTech Centre was scheduled to open in Chicago before Christmas, but has been delayed until March 1990 due to leasing problems. Weisman enthuses, "It's in Las Vegas and Los Angeles are under negotiation. We're also in touch with major UK arcade companies and theme-park organisers - we hope to have a deal signed soon..."

# BEVERLY HILLS

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Look out, Beverly Hills  
Here comes Axel Foley!

The hero of "Beverly Hills Cop" and "Beverly Hills Cop II" is back in Beverly Hills - and this time he's working on a case that's a real stumper! He's going to stop the crime of the year, unless an army of trigger-happy gunmen stop him first!

You'll roar down crowded city streets, race against time to stop a daring robbery, stalk armed killers, hunt for clues to a bizarre crime, and fight for your life again and again in this high-speed action adventure starring the fast talking, quick-shooting detective.

#### AVAILABLE ON:

ST £24.99 AMIGA £24.99 PC £24.99 CBM64 CASS £9.99  
CBM64 DISK £14.99 AMSTRAD CASS £9.99 AMSTRAD DISK £14.99  
SPECTRUM CASS £8.99 SPECTRUM DISK £14.99

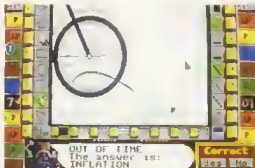


# UPDATES

A ROUND UP OF THE LATEST MAJOR CONVERSIONS

## PICTIONARY

The latest versions -  
ST, Spectrum, Amstrad



Pictionary on the ST

Domark; Amiga Version  
reviewed Issue 26; ACE Rating  
790

Having managed to capture the license for the most popular board game of all time (*Trivial Pursuit* — for those who've been living in a cupboard for the last five years), Domark have now turned their attentions to the lat-

est Yuppie board game — Pictionary. The idea behind this one is that one member of a team draws a picture and the other players have to guess the word that the picture is intended to convey within a set time limit. Guessing the word correctly allows you to move your counter further round the board.



Pictionary on the Amstrad

### ST VERSION

£24.99dk

The first thing that struck me about this version was how well the drawing utility actually stands up in its own right. All of the functions are particularly easy to access (just a single key press for each), and there are enough of them to produce some quite intricate doodles. The arc tool is particularly useful and powerful. As an added bonus, once you have completed a picture you can save it in Neochrome format (it is then a fairly simple matter to import it into most commercial ST art software).

I'm not convinced that paying £25 for Pictionary on the ST is preferable to buying the original board game. However, the ST and other versions do have the additional appeal of being able to assign all the picture drawing to the computer (essential if you're playing solo).

● ACE RATING 750

### SPECTRUM VERSION

£19.99dk £14.99cs

The first thing I expected to find on loading up this version was an inferior doodle package, so I was pleasantly surprised to find that this was not the case. All of the functions available are easily accessed with either the pointer or a single key press. The disadvantage of this and other 8-bit versions is the lack of a mouse for drawing. I tried playing with the keyboard controls, and to be quite honest, drawing anything other



Pictionary on the Spectrum

than very simple shapes proved to be a long-winded and painful process. It is still quite fun to play with the computer drawing the pictures, although if you have the cassette version be prepared to wait during the frequent tape loads as the next block of pictures is got into memory.

● ACE RATING 550

### AMSTRAD VERSION

£19.99dk £14.99cs

The presentation here is slightly better than on the Spectrum version, although the sound is still limited to a twangy title tune and the occasional bop when you select a function. There are still the same difficulties with drawing without a mouse, although it is a little easier if you use a joystick. Again, not a bad effort, but both this and the other 8-bit versions are a little overpriced.

● ACE RATING 600



Fiendish Freddy on the ST

## ATARI ST

### FIENDISH FREDDY'S BIG TOP 'O FUN

Mindscapa; £29.99; Amiga Version reviewed Issue 24; ACE Rating 775

Fiendish Freddy is one of those games that really shows off the capabilities of the Amiga. It had great sound, bold cartoon style graphics, and bags of humour. It was also the sort of game that could well have lost all its appeal once it had been converted to the ST. Happily that is not the case. Everything that made this game

enough to earn enough money to pay off the loan. These are High Diving, Juggling, Trapeze Swinging, Knife Throwing, Tightrope Walking, and Human Cannonball.

Each of the events is quite difficult to master, but matters are made worse by the presence of Fiendish Freddy himself — an evil little clown who is determined to sabotage every single event.

The whole thing is a lot of fun to play, and the large humorous sprites should keep you entertained for some time. Shame about the tedious disc swapping though.

ACE Rating 725



Continental Circus on the ST

appealing on the Amiga has been packed into the ST version. Packed in, perhaps, the wrong word to use. The whole thing sprawls over no less than six disks. A fact which is not made any more delightful by the necessity for frequently swapping the disc that is currently in the drive.

The idea behind Fiendish Freddy is that the bank are about to foreclose on you and make your circus bankrupt, so unless you can come up with the cash within 24 hours all will be lost. The way you manage this is by performing six circus acts well

### CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

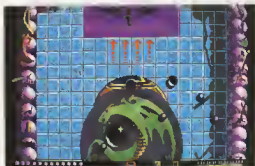
VIRGIN/MASTERTRONIC; £19.99dk; Amiga Version reviewed Issue 26; ACE Rating 875

Virgin's 2D version of Tarto's unusual 3D arcade racing game has now made it to the ST. Continental Circus was not the most amazing arcade game of 1989 but it did have the virtue of being extremely playable. The Amiga version was a superb conversion from the dedicated machine, and

as far as I can tell the ST version is identical in almost every respect. I say 'almost' because the ST's inferior sound chip has reared its ugly head again and foisted things up for the Circus programmers. Actually it's not all that bad — your engine just goes suddenly silent as opposing cars whizz past.

That's a minor quibble though — the game is otherwise excellent. There are some interesting aspects to this game which gives it a slight edge over other similar offerings. If you crash, for instance, your car is damaged but not completely written off, so you still have time to crawl into the pits for a repair. Well worth a look if you're a racing fan.

ACE Rating 850



Ballistix on the PC

## PC

### BALLISTIX

Psychapse; £24.95dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 20; ACE Rating 686

Psychapses are the sort of company who can take an old, simple idea, chuck in some pretty nifty graphics and some amazing sounds, then bring out a game good enough to be mistaken for an arcade original. The idea for this one apparently comes from Crossfire, but I doubt if many can remember it, I certainly can't. The idea is to shoot balls at the puck and to knock it into the opposing goal.

You can play against a friend or the computer. You've got an infinite number of balls, but each ball only lasts for a couple of seconds. The screen can sometimes get cluttered up with an array of balls. The computer doesn't control the other player, but sets a gravity boundary which can prevent

the puck from getting into the opposing goal if you knock in three against the computer (or against your opponent) you can progress to the next level. Hazards like the floor such as magnetic forces and walls which hinder the journey of the puck. There are around 50 pitches in the one player mode and about 80 in the two player. You can adjust the flow of the game by changing parameters like gravity pulls and shooting. There are tokens in the form of boxes that give you things like exploding balls and letters that spell out "RICOCHET".

The EGA graphics don't stretch to the PC to its limit, and although the screens that were breathtaking on the ST and Amiga are included, they fail to impress. Sprites and background graphics are pretty to look at but can, as I mentioned before, clutter up the

screen. The sound is a bit irritating — enough to give you a headache. The game doesn't really present any challenge, and is far from addictive. Ballistix on the PC is similar to the other 16 bit versions, even down to start-up sequences, but alas, it doesn't quite make the grade.

ACE Rating 589

## UPDATES CRAZY!

Starting in Issue 30, we'll be running a new updates section in ACE, covering more machines, more games, and giving more detail.

If you've got any suggestions for the new section, let us know at ACE Updates, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.





# ACE GALLERY

ACE READERS PROVE THEIR PIXEL PROWESS...

**H**ere at ACE we're well aware that our readers are a talented bunch and on these pages we're going to prove it. The stunning pieces of artwork that follow have all been produced by ACE readers on their own micros. Impressed? So were we. If you think you can do as well or better, then send your masterpieces to ACE READERS ART, Phury Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London. EC1R 3AU. Your artwork should be supplied on a disk or cassette with a slideshow program that can be paused and loading instructions. Ensure that all disks and tapes are clearly labelled with your name and address. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you require the disk/cassette to be returned.



**CHRISTIAN CAPSTAFF, Great Yarmouth  
AMSTRAD CPC 464**



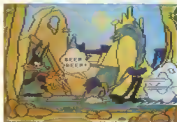
These two pictures just go to show that you don't have to own expensive 16-bit hardware to produce good artwork. Christian drew these pictures of Superman and Roadrunner using OCP's Advanced Art Studio, one of the best art programs available for 8-bit machines.

Both pictures make good use of strong colour and well defined lines to achieve the necessary cartoon-like quality. Notice the good use of shading in the Roadrunner picture to make up for the limited colours available on the CPC.

**ANDREW WALLIS, Brough, North  
Numberside  
ATARI ET**

The Flintstones and Donkey Kong were both initially drawn using Advanced Art Studio, and then finished off with Degas Elite (see excellent ST art package characterised by its ability to run with GDOS and to work in all three screen resolutions).

Andrew has clearly stuck to the principles of cartoon art to produce these pieces. Keep all your lines strong and simple and go for bold, distinctive colours. You will be surprised at the degree of expression, personality and action you can incorporate into a good cartoon without resorting to complex, detailed drawings.



**SEAN RYAN, Waterford, Ireland  
COMMODORE 64**

These two Batman pics are superb examples of the sort of thing you can do even on a machine with low resolution and a limited colour palette. Sean has not been afraid to put shadow to good effect. This is always a good idea because it gives the pictures a more dynamic three-dimensional quality than it would otherwise have. Sean has combined this with the use of lighter colours to produce effective highlights.





**ANDREW WALLIS**, Brough, North Humberside  
**ATARI ST**

The Flintstones and Donkey Kong were both initially drawn using Advanced Art Studio, and then finished off with Degas Elite (an excellent ST art package characterised by its ability to run with ODDS and to work in all three screen resolutions).

Andrew has clearly stuck to the principles of cartoon art to produce these pieces. Keep all your lines strong and simple and go for bold, distinctive colours. You will be surprised at the degree of expression, personality and action you can incorporate into a good cartoon without resorting to complex, detailed drawings.



**POB**, London  
**ATARI ST**

Pob used Degas Elite to produce the colourful robot picture, and an interesting distortion of the standard ST desktop. He tells us that 'because all of the pictures have light shining in them, I had to use the Degas zoom mode to make sure they were accurate enough and had few or no rough edges. I hope these pictures show that almost anything can be achieved with a palette of only 15 colours.'

# 1 BATMAN

## Batman - The Movie from Ocean

Taken from the brilliant block buster movie. Prowl the streets of Gotham City in your Batmobile. Come face to face with the dreaded Joker at the Aes Chemical Factory. Analyse the Joker's Nerve Gas in the Batcave and then prepare yourself for the final fight to the death in the cathedral.

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Amiga Format



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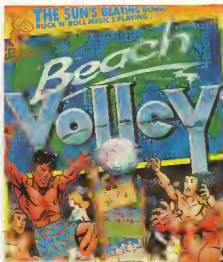
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# 3

## Beach Volley from Ocean

Your team travels the globe from London to Sydney challenging all comers in the latest craze that's sweeping the beaches. Fantastic action with variable service and play controls as you lob the defences, try a lightning reflex short smash to win back your service, jump block or defend your match winner.

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Amiga	Disk	£24.99	BF925AM



2

### Strider from US Gold

In the eternal struggle between good and evil, both Russians and Russians look very different. You take on the role of Strider Hiryu and need to do battle with The Lord and his wicked minions. You're dropped into Red Square and must guide Strider across platforms, destroying KGB agents with your trusty sword. Get through all this and return to Moscow to face the Grand Master of the Red Army.

'Arcade fans who like their games spaced with plenty of action and rushing around are certainly going to enjoy this.'

Amiga Format



#### Strider

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Amiga	Disk	£24.99	BF916AM



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4

### Turbo Out Run from US Gold

Get ready to put your foot to the metal, pedal to the floor, because Out Run is back! The game takes you on a 4 stage race across America. Driving a Ferrari F40 you'll battle bumper to bumper with good guys and bad guys, police cars, Porsche, blown engines and fickle girlfriends. Sixteen different scenes will take you through congested city streets, over snow and icy mountain passes and across sun-baked deserts.

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# IN THE PINK

## NINTENDO COMPO .....145

Now's your chance to get going with portable games playing. Nintendo are offering you the chance of getting your mitts on the stunning Game Boy pocketable console. Plus — those lovely people are putting up the Nintendo Deluxe NES home system.

## GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE .....132

The ACE updated guide to the games you just have to buy. Check them out, and then look at your collection. Remember — it's coming up to Christmas and time to give yourself a treat

## BRUCE LEE VIDS! .....160

Crash! Pow! Mindscape are giving you the chance to add the COMPLETE set of Bruce Lee videos to your collection. And they're offering 10 readers copies of the great Bruce Lee game! ...

## ACE READERS PAGES .....158

Stacks of ads that might just contain the very second hand thing you've been looking for — or the help you need to crack that game that's been bugging you for months.

## COMPO RESULTS .....154

Are you in for a big prize? Or even a little one? Find out on our results page.

## THE ACE PRIZE PUZZLE .....155

Have you got a brain the size of a planet? Of course you have, and of course this month you really are going to win that exclusive prize for eggheads.

## CRAZY CAPTION COMPO! .....162

Richard Branson's in a pickle 'cos he can't get his balloon breath. Now in a competition that's Virgin on the ridiculous we're giving you the chance to win the latest Virgin Mastertronic game — but only if you come up with a brilliant caption.

## DIARIES AND DATES .....142

All the events you need to know about in the coming month...

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conversions of the year that should not be missed

★ **ACE RATED 934**

## RVF

Microstyle, ST £24.99, Amiga £29.99

RVF offers a near endless supply of last paced bike action as you race your Honda RVF. Attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your rider giving the bike a push start after a crash. An excellent mix of arcade and simulation

★ **ACE RATED 915**

## SPIDERTRON-IC

Ers International • Atan ST £19.95

Guide your spider-like character around the game arena, collecting coloured pellets in the correct order. The built-in construction set means you'll be knocking out your own levels in the cows come home

★ **ACE RATED 903**

## SUMMER GAMES

Epyx/US Gold • C64 £9.95 £14.95 • C64 £9.95 £14.95 • IBM PC £29.95

Epyx sporting simulations of high quality but none have quite captured the playability and style of the original Summer Games and its immediate successor Summer Games 2. One to see players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, springboard diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, pole vault – and others – with lovely large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your style can be complex so practice is recommended

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## SUPER SPRINT

Electric Dreams • C64 £9.95 £14.95 • Amiga £9.95 • Spectrum £9.95 • Atan ST £19.95

One of the better computer conversions currently available. With up to three

players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more torridous circuits that appear later in the game

★ **ACE RATED 907**

## TNRUST

Firebird • Spectrum £1.95 • C64 £1.95 • Amiga £1.95

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of realistic physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun barrels without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is – but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load slung under your very mean yet very addictive

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## URIDIUM

Hewson • Spectrum £8.95 • C64 £9.95 • £12.95 • BBC £9.95 • £14.95

The piece de resistance of scrolling shoot-em-ups: blast the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic looking dreadnoughts and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the competition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent

Paradise

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## ZARCH / VIRUS

Supernova Software • Archimedes £19.95 • Firebird £16 and 8-bit versions • Amiga £19.95 • Atan ST £19.95 • Some 8-bit versions under development

A solid three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and timeless addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 16-bit versions have arrived and they're just as

# ADVENTURES

After a brief surge of RPG related popularity, the traditional text-entry adventure is rapidly disappearing. But for those of you who savour the powers of the imagination, the verbal twist, and the thrill of encountering other characters, this game genre still has much to recommend it. Here are some of the all-time great computer fantasies...

good as the 32-bit versions

★ **ACE RATED 901**

## BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Activision • C64 £19.95 • PC £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • Atan ST £24.95

Infocom's attempt to muscle in on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quedor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Textonly, but with an on-screen mapping facility

★ **ACE RATED 902**

## CORRUPTION

Rainbird • Atan ST £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • PC £24.95 • Spectrum £15.95 • C64 £17.95 • Amiga £12.95 • £19.95

This tale of insider dealings, infidelity and crooked business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventurers who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are led up by traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a no-holding plot makes this a terrific game that grips from the start

★ **ACE RATED 920**

## FISH

Magnetic Scrolls • PC £24.95 • Amiga £24.95

More gameplay than Corruption, better game design than Amiga, and not as quirky as The Pawn. This is definitely MS's best release since Gold Of Thieves. Good stuff indeed

★ **ACE RATED**

## GUILD OF THIEVES

Rainbird • C64 £19.95 • Spectrum £15.95 • Amiga £12.95 • £19.95 • Amiga £24.95 • Atan ST £24.95 • PC £24.95

One of Britain's newer adventure software houses – Magnetic Scrolls – managed to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful parser helps to create a convincing game world with humour and imagination

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## INGRID'S BACK

Level 9 • Atan ST £19.95

A great follow-up to Grimm Ranger. Level 9 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively

★ **ACE RATED 920**

## JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Rainbird • C64 £14.95 • Spectrum £28.95 • Amiga £14.95 • £19.95 • PC £19.95 • Amiga £19.95 • Atan ST £19.95

Level 9 have put together three of their classic releases. Cobalt's Adventure, Dungeon Adventure and Adventure Quest in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## LURKING HORROR

Infocom/Mediascene • C64 £19.95 • ST £24.95 • Amiga £24.95 • PC £24.95

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cold sweat as you discover something very nasty lurking beneath your college laboratory. Superb text-only game that defies you to play it after dark

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## TIME AND MAGIK

Mendelson • Spectrum £14.95 • C64 £14.95 • Amiga £14.95 • Atan ST £14.95 • Amiga £19.95 • PC £19.95

This compilation of the Level 9 games Lords Of Time, Red Moon and The Price Of Magic have been revamped with better parsing, bigger vocabularies and pictures added. Superb value if you don't already own them.

★ **ACE RATED 919**

## ZORK ZERO

Infocom Versions due out about now. Watch this space for price info. Highly enjoyable with a variety of challenges that make for instant addiction. A bit more character interaction would have made this a real humdinger, but even so it remains one of the

# PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

## BONE-CRUNCHER

Supernova Software • C64 £9.95 • £11.95 • Amiga £14.95

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a boulder-dash rip-off. However there are a number of innovative gameplay features which give Bonecruncher a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.

★ **ACE RATED 948**

★ **AMIGA**

## BOULDERDASH

Prism Leisure Corporation • Spectrum £2.95 • C64 £2.95 • Amiga £2.95

A game that has everything – instant addiction, long-term challenge, fre-

netic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, digging away earth and boulders to get to them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex but great fun. Boulderdash is a classic you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

## DEFLEKTOR

Demon/Mortex • C64 £9.95 • Spectrum £7.95 • ST £19.95

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to connect a laser beam to a receiver and all the same time destroy a



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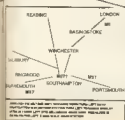
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AND DELIVERY**



number of cells that are on screen as well. You will need to make full use of the memory, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and reflecting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 50 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's horribly addictive too.

★ ACE RATED 900 - ST

## NEBULUS

Hewlett • C64 £9 95cs  
£14 95 dk • Amstrad  
£14 95 dk

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ladders that form the route. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good-looking, playable winner of a game.

★ ACE RATED 843 - C64

## SENTINEL

Firebird • Spectrum £9 95cs  
C64 £9 95cs  
£14 95dk • Amstrad  
£9 95cs £14 95 dk •  
Amstrad ST £19 95dk •  
Amiga £19 95dk

Brutal and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clean brain and last trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large 10,000 possible land-scapes game.

★ ACE RATED 963 - AMIGA

## SKULL DIGGERS

Nexus • Amstrad ST £19 95

Boulderdash clone that completely outdoes this original on this particular machine. Again (see Boulderdash above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns over a hundred different screens - with a time limit for each screen. Stunning scenery scores on playability master screens to begin with and a choice of starting ponds and its entertaining two-player

option.

★ ACE RATED 810 - ST

**SPORE**  
Buildix • C64 £1 99cs •  
Amstrad £1 99cs • Spectrum £1 99cs

This winning combination of strategy, frenzied blasting and great graphics make Spore a worthy full-priced release. What a bargain then to be able to pick it up for £1 99.

★ ACE RATED 810 - C64

**TETRIS**  
Mirrosoft • Spectrum £8 99cs • C64 £8 99cs  
£12 99dk • Amstrad  
£8 99cs £12 99 dk •  
Amstrad ST £19 95dk •  
Amiga £19 95dk • IBM  
PC £19 95dk

A fascinating geometrical oddity this Russian puzzle turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cool game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen - your task is to guide them down and pack them tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather valuable in their archaic aspects, but the brilliantly simple ideas behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.

★ ACE RATED 850 - C64

**THINK!**  
Firebird • C64 £1 99cs •  
Amstrad £1 99cs • Spectrum £1 99cs

Originally released by Amstrad at full price, but now available for a fraction of that from Firebird. It's a horribly addictive game played on a 6x6 grid - either one or two player - in which you attempt to connect four counters, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

★ ACE CLASSIC

**XOR**  
Logotron • BBC £9 95cs  
£12 85dk • Amstrad  
£9 95cs £14 95dk •  
Spectrum £7 95cs

Extremely tricky maze game involving the player

controlling two shields, and collecting masks through 19 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, fish and chickens in or out, often blocking the masks and just waiting

to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, things hot up as bombs, transporters and dolls conspire against you. Smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning

# SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section.

## ATF

Digital Integration • C64  
£8 95cs £12 95dk •  
Amstrad £8 95cs  
£12 95dk • Spectrum  
£8 95cs £13 95dk

Excellent combat/light simulator that is a bit of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation specialist. The emphasis is on solid action (the result being a wire-frame hit).

★ ACE RATED 856 - SPECTRUM

## DARK SIDE

Incentive • C64 £9 95cs  
£14 95dk • Amstrad  
£9 95cs £14 95dk •  
Spectrum £9 95cs  
£14 95dk

The second game using the Freescape programming system which sets more of an archaic challenge. The 3D graphics are again superb as are the tasks and puzzles.

★ ACE RATED 915 - AMSTRAD

## ELITE

Firebird • C64 £14 95cs  
£17 95dk • Amstrad  
£12 95cs £14 95dk •  
Spectrum £14 95cs •  
BBC £13.95cs £14.95dk  
(available from Superior software)

Sell the best space trading game, Elite set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies with plenty of variety to the game play. You can trade legal goods in relatively safe systems, or run the gambit of prizes in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way

there's a nice line in zero-G dogfighting, and as big a task as you'll find any where.

★ ACE CLASSIC

## INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

Electric Dreams • C64  
£8 99cs £14 95dk •  
Amstrad £8 99cs  
£14 99dk • Spectrum  
£9 99cs £14 99dk • Amstrad  
ST £19 99dk • Amiga  
£24 99dk

A manic maze world where mess, size and inertia combine to provide wretched gameplay. Ticky puzzles and endless nasty obstacles will have you raving around in delight.

★ ACE RATED 923 - C64

## M1 TANK PLATON

Microgross • PC  
£39 99dk

This is a welcome break from lightgames that boasts enough detail to keep even the most computer picky happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamer. A winner.

★ ACE RATED 926

## MAGNETRON

Firebird • C64 £8 95cs  
£12 95dk • Spectrum  
£8 95cs £12 95dk

Puzzles and action Steve Turner style. Save the world by dismantling eight satellites. Steal parts from enemy drovers to upgrade your own droid and hopefully make your job a little easier. The ideal game for Quazatron fans looking for a similar, new challenge

★ ACE RATED 904 - SPECTRUM

## QUEDEX

Thalamus • C64 £9 95cs  
£14 95dk

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles all within a set time limit.

This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly pleasing, you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and toggle the different screens or planes in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.

★ ACE RATED 934 - C64

## SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams • C64  
£8 99cs £14 95dk •  
Spectrum £9 99cs •  
Amstrad £9 99cs £14 95dk

Timidous stuff, steer your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect jewels, against a tendish time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of cableways, ramps, towers and trampolines surrounded by lethal drops - and no safety rails. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge traps, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of nice touches, but the explosions thing.

★ ACE CLASSIC

## STARGLIDER II

Harvard • Atari ST  
£24 95dk • Amiga  
£24 99dk

## STARGLIDER II

Harvard • Atari ST  
£24 95dk • Amiga  
£24 99dk

One of the finest examples of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage gets the solid 3D treatment and comes out looking every bit a winner. You've got a large task to complete and there's plenty of Egon's to destroy, making this combination of blasting and exploration that stands head above the competition.

★ ACE RATED 927 - ST

## STAR TREK V

Mindscope • PC  
£34 95cs • MAC  
£34 99cs

This is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. The gameplay provides absorbing and challenging hours of fun. A must for Trekkers and an entertaining space strategy/simulator for everyone else.

★ ACE RATED 930

## TAU GETU/ACADEMY

CRL • C64 £8 95cs  
£14 95dk • Amstrad  
£9 95cs £14 95dk •  
Spectrum £9 95cs • Amstrad  
ST £19 99dk • Amiga  
£19 95

Fright simulator/shoot 'em up and its sequel which are both incredibly smooth and well put together. The attention to detail is impeccable as you set off on hair-raising missions as a space cadet. In Academy you get to design your own space skimmer craft as well.

★ ACE CLASSIC

## TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive • C64 £9 95cs  
£12 95dk • Amstrad  
£9 95cs £12 95dk •  
Spectrum £9 95cs  
£14 95dk

The third game using the Freescape system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. In total eclipse you're battling against time back in the 1930's trying to prevent the moon exploding. For arcade adventurers who love puzzles the Freescape system is a godsend.

★ ACE RATED 907 - AMSTRAD

## WIZBALL

Ocean • C64 £8 95cs  
£14 95dk • Amstrad  
£8 95cs £12 95dk •  
Spectrum £8 95cs  
£14 95dk

Becoming Wizball and conquer the colour creates which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and drab. One of the most playable games around despite the simple scenario.

## RPG

Role-playing games have exerted an enormous influence on modern game-style. They combine the atmosphere of text adventures with the action of arcade games and the brain exercise of strategy – but their graphical presentation tends to be weaker than other game genres. Gameplay centres around developing characters by raising their experience and skill levels in conflict with other, computer-controlled nasties. All that – and a quest too...

### THE BARD'S TALE II

Electronic Arts • C64  
£16.95, Amiga £24.95

The highly successful predecessor to *Bards Tale III* BT II has the advantage of being slightly easier to advance. The Amiga version features some very nice sampled music charts when you enter a temple and excellently coloured graphics. And of course, you can update your favourite characters, their attributes and equipment for use in BT III.

### THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts • C64  
£14.95

The latest *Bard's Tale* game offers a number of refinements over its predecessor (all of which are still well worth taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better animated. Second, there are ranged combat routines which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's large and represents excellent value for money.

### BATTLETECH

Infocom, PC £29.95

BattleTech features some incredible cartoon sequences, arcade style action, role play and strategy in short a com-

plete, full game. A brilliant RPG purchase even though it missed out on an Ace rating.

### DUNGEON MASTER

Electronic Arts • C64  
£14.95

Quoted as being a 'milestone in Advanced Computer Entertainment', *Dungeon Master* offers 14 levels, loads of spells, atmospheric graphics and sound. All going to make *Dungeon Master* one of the best roleplaying adventures to have appeared on any machine.

### POOL OF RADIANCE

US GOLD/SSI  
C64 £14.95

SSI were very brave to attempt to capture the complex concept of the AD&D system on a computer, but they managed superbly. An RPG-influenced game that will appeal to not only AD&D fans but to anyone looking for an enthralling game that will keep them playing for months.

### ULTIMA V

Origin Systems/Microprose  
C64 £24.95 • PC £29.95 • ST/Amiga to be announced

Amazing level of detail in this role-playing

influenced epic. Travel round Britannia trashing the opposition and learning the magical, tactical, and geographical secrets that will enable you to defeat the forces of evil far underground. Superb

hump, great listening interest, and tough challenges galore.  
★ ACE RATED 92%

### WASTELAND

Electronic Arts • C64  
£14.95

## BRAIN GAMES

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want a game that offers you an opponent who's worthy of your skills? Then this is your section...

### CHESS MASTER 2000

Electronic Arts • C64  
£9.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £24.95 • Atari ST £24.95 • IBM PC £24.95

Strongest chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics. 2D or 3D viewpoint, 12 levels of difficulty and all the playing options you could wish for. Plus some fairly hefty search syntheses.

### COLOSSUS CHESS 4

CGS • C64 £9.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £9.95 • £14.95 • Spectrum £9.95

Best bet for 8-bit machine owners, with a choice of 2D or 3D view, unlimited levels of difficulty, and a

myriad options which enable you to play, watch, work out chess problems, etc against a free computer opponent.

★ ACE CLASSIC

### COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CGS • C64 £9.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £9.95 • £14.95

Rummy-like oriental game of strategy and chance. A tutor program and a short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike.

### INFOGAMES' BRIDGE

Infogrames • Amiga £12.95 • £15.95 • MSX £12.95

Change around irradiated USA whopping mutant burnies and baker soup in this role-playing epic. The atmosphere may not be as good as the *Bard's Tale* series of games, but

the extra dimension of strategy leaves the cut, slash and spell scenario of the BT series way behind.  
★ ACE RATED 92%

Graphically the best of all contract bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitably green baize background. Plays a good game like a computer, which after all is a bit short in the imagination and flair department and features a wide range of options and bidding conventions which you can toggle off according to your style.

### POWERPLAY

Amiga • C64 £8.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £8.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £19.95 • Atari ST £19.95

If you want to try out your general knowledge, are reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of

strategy game and quiz than with the admittedly monder selling *Trivial Pursuits*. *Powerplay* is graphically very pretty in its setting on Mount Olympus – home of the Gods.

### SCRABBLE

Leisure Genus • C64 £12.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £9.95 • £14.95 • IBM PC £24.95

The hugely popular word game translated very successfully onto the micro. Fast excellent display, and a surprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange looking words on some occasions). Good enough to give even strong human opponents a tough game at the higher levels.

## WAR GAMES

Fancy yourself as a master of grand strategy, marshalling hordes of troops and sending them off to do battle on your behalf? Look no further than the ACE war games section...

### ARNHEM

CGS, Spectrum £8.95 • Amiga £9.95 • C64 £9.95

One of the oldest quality wargames featured in the section, *Arnhem* was easily the best in the field. It has all the expected atmosphere, five separate scenarios and one of the toughest computer opponents you could ever wish to meet. A thoroughly absorbing wargame which can be classed as one of the old masters.

★ ACE RATED 810

### CONFLICT EUROPE

Microsoft, ST £24.95, Amiga £24.95, PC TBA

The 16 bit progression of *Theatre Europe*. Lots of extra graphical and sound effects. The computer controlled intelligence was marginally sophisticated but still enough to give a challenging game. The correct balance between strategy and excitement throughout. Great for beginners and intermediate players.

★ ACE RATED 882

### THEATRE EUROPE

PBS, Spectrum £9.95, C64 £8.95 • £14.95 • Amiga £9.95 • £14.95

The perfect game for 8-bit owners who go green with envy when they look at *Conflict Europe*. *Theatre Europe* is the forerunner to the excellent 16-bit game. The graphics and overall play are not as sophisticated, but on the whole it still is one heck of a game.

★ ACE RATED 815

### UMS

Ranbar, ST £24.95 • PC £24.95, Macintosh £34.95, Amiga £24.95

Probably the greatest war game to date. *UMS* unique 3D systems enables the creation of almost any battle in history. As well as a very sophisticated computer opponents yet. On top of this are add on scenarios and a very useful construction kit to keep you going for even longer. An essential purchase.

★ ACE RATED 907

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# FLIGHT SIMULATIONS

How about flying the latest US Stealth Fighter on a mission over Siberia? Or perhaps a quick flight over Hawaii would be more relaxing? Computer flight simulations can fulfill any flight of fancy

## BATTLE-HAWKS 1942

Lucasfilm Games/AUS Gold

■ ST £24 95dk ■ Amiga £24 95dk ■ PC £24 95dk

A WWII NAVAL AIR COMBAT SIMULATOR COVERING THE FOUR MOST IMPORTANT BATTLES OF THE 1942 PACIFIC WAR. FOR KNUCKLE-WHITENING ACTION THIS ONE HAS EVERYTHING - THE SENSE OF 'BEING THERE' IS TREMENDOUS. THRILLING AND SURPRISINGLY ADDICTIVE STUFF.

★ ACE RATED 928

## BOMBER

Activision ■ Spectrum £14 99cs £19 99dk ■ C64 £14 99cs £19 99dk ■ Amstrad £14 99cs £19 99dk ■ ST £24 95dk ■ Amiga £24 99dk ■ PC £24 99dk

Vector Graphics has spent a long time on this one - and it certainly shows. The game gets the balance just right between convincing simulation and enterprising game. Highly recommended.

★ ACE RATED 925

## CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

Electronic Arts ■ Spectrum ■ C64 ■ CPC ■ ST ■ Amiga ■ PC £24 95dk

Fly a multitude of aircraft from an early biplane to the Space Shuttle. It's unbelievably different from your standard flight sim and there's so much in this game that it will take many hours of instructive fun to experience and master all the available options.

★ ACE RATED 912

## F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Digital Integration ■ ST £24 95dk ■ Amiga £24 95dk ■ PC £24 95dk

This took nine person years to develop, and you can feel that quality of work when playing it - it's one of the most realistic flight sims on the market. If you are a connoisseur of flight simulators then this is an essential addition to your collection.

★ ACE RATED 970

## FALCON

Spectrum ■ Amiga ■ Spectrum ■ C64 ■ CPC ■ ST ■ Amiga ■ PC £24 95dk ■ MAC

If you really want the terror, exhilaration and

sheer everything-happens-at-once confusion of combat flying, this game delivers. Make no mistake, this game is the real thing. An essential purchase for fastjet fans.

★ ACE RATED 945

## FLIGHT SIMULATOR II

Sublogic ■ C64 £39 95dk ■ ST £49 95dk ■ Amiga £49 95dk ■ PC £49 95dk ■ NAC £49 95dk

The flight sim that put the genre on to the map. Thoroughly realistic flight sim of a domestic Cessna plane, which is even used by flight schools to train

would be pilots. Can be enhanced by a variety of scenery disks.

## ★ ACE CLASSIC

INTERCEPTOR  
Electronic Arts ■ Amiga £24 95dk

A low level flight sim with a hivel of fun. Purists may dispute the label simulator - it's certainly wouldn't train you to fly a real life Harrier - but this program combines realism and gameplay far too well for that. In fact if you want seal-of-the-joints air combat action, this is the graphics and NO six month training period, look no further!

★ ACE RATED

# RACING SIMULATIONS

In you can't have too much of a good thing, even if the excitement is liable to give the old ticker a good going over. Racing sims have really come into their own over the past couple of years - and this is where you find out how to get the best of motor racing action - all from the comfort of that armchair in front of your computer...

## LOMBARD RAC RALLY

Mandarin ■ ST ■ Amiga ■ PC

Race through many types of terrain, such as mountain or forest, and through many types of weather conditions, such as fog or rain. The game has a nice atmosphere, and though the variety of gameplay may be a little low, it's still a game you'd be playing for a good while.

## FERRARI FORMULA ONE

Electronic Arts ■ ST £24 95dk ■ Amiga £24 95dk ■ PC £24 95dk

A bit old this one, but still a game that was way

ahead of its time to start with. Take the wheel of a Formula One Ferrari racer on some of the most famous racecourses in the world. A true thoroughbred.

## R.V.F.

Microstyle ■ ST £24 99dk ■ Amiga £24 99dk

The champion in the Best Sports Based Racing Game stakes, and a superb simulation this one puts you into the world of performance like racing on none other than the Honda RVF750. Brilliant graphics, brilliant sound, brilliant game.

## STUNT CAR RACER

Microstyle ■ Spectrum

£9 99cs £14 99dk ■ C64 £9 99cs £14 99dk ■ ST £24 99dk ■ Amiga £24 99dk ■ PC £24 99dk

This places itself in the annals of computer history as being one of the most amazing spectacles to watch, let alone play. The game is first-person perspective with the outside world made up of really fast smooth 3D vectors, and the impression of realism is unbelievable. An amazing experience, and a clear winner. Where can things go from here?

## SUPER HANG ON

Electronic Dreams ■ Spectrum £9 99cs ■ C64 £9 99cs £14 99dk ■ Amstrad £9 99cs £14 99dk ■ ST £24 99dk

■ Amiga £24 99dk

Not so much a simulation as a perfect arcade conversion of a brilliant bike racing Sega coin-op. Great game, excellent conversion.

## THE DUEL - TEST DRIVE II

Accolade ■ C64 ■ ST ■ Amiga ■ PC ■ MAC

Accolade tried to right all the Test Drive wrongs with this sequel, and to an extent they succeeded. There's nothing serious about the game. It's just a lot of fun. It doesn't claim to be technically or visually accurate - but why should it?

## THE ARSENAL

This may not be the place to say it, but it's got to be said and there's a wee space here, so why not? Arsenal are finished. This may not matter to you, but here in the ACE office it's an issue of great importance. You see, ACE's ebullient, bullish, entitled manager, Gary Williams is an Arsenal season ticket holder. It's just past over the fact that Gary comes from Blackpool. Last May he was cock-a-hoop, as Michael Thomas scored the last minute goal at Arsenal that secured the league championship.

Well, eat your heart out Gary Williams. As I write it is a mere 16 hours since Arsenal were soundly beaten by Liverpool at Arsenal. It's only a few days since they were hammered 3-1 by lowly Oldham Athletic (and not even George Graham could blame it on the plastic pitch).

Is this the end of Arsenal? Should Gary Williams trade his season ticket at Highbury for a place on the terraces at Boundary Park, famous home of the famous 'Latics? Watch this space.



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# ACE DIARY

## INTO THE NEW DECADE

### DECEMBER RELEASES AT A GLANCE

PC  
Populous and Populous: Promised Lands (Electronic Arts). Highly acclaimed world manipulation game makes it on to the PC, offices everywhere should nodder to a hall. Keel the Thiel (Electronic Arts). Tongue-in-cheek graphic adventure, originally on Amiga/ST. Fiering (Electronic Arts). Stunt Car Racer (Micro Style). Galdregon's Domain (Pandora). Bruce Lee Lives (Mindscape). Amiga  
Neuromancer (Electronic Arts). Role playing adventure. Infestation (Psygnosis). Blast away in solid 3D. Hardball II (Accolade). Baseball sim sequel. Alan ST:  
Infestation (Psygnosis, see above).  
All formats: Snoopy and the Case of the Lost Blanket (The Edge). Big cartoon licence - join Snoopy in the hunt for Linus's missing blanket. The Search for Shara (Thalamus). ACE adventure boasting hundreds of screens, characters, etc. Powerboat USA (Accolade, not CPC or Spectrum). Offshore powerboat simulation with various 'courses' from around the world

### TUESDAY 12

Independence Day, Kenya  
**WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE**

Amiga. Battle of Austerlitz (IPSS). Bloodwych Data Disk (Image Works). Starlight (Electronic Arts). Graphic adventure with fantasy/galactic scenario. Hound of Shadow (Electronic Arts). Role playing adventure cum horror yarn. Alan ST  
Hound of Shadow (Electronic Arts, see above).  
Battle of Austerlitz (IPSS).  
Bloodwych Data Disk (Image Works). PC: Gold of the Americas (Electronic Arts). Interphase (Image Works). Arcade adventure with 3D Hired vector graphics and bizarre plot. Wolfpack (IPSS). Naval simulation set in the North Atlantic in World War II. Much attention lavished on authenticity and graphics. Dungeon Master (FTL). Acclaimed role playing game make sit on the PC.  
Flight of the Intruder (Spectrum Holobyte). Aerial combat game set during the Linebacker campaign in Vietnam, 1972. Harpoon (IPSS). The Cold War lives on in NATO vs Warsaw pact game with you

controlling NATO task force in North Atlantic. C64.  
Starlight (Electronic Arts, disk only, see above). Madden Football (Electronic Arts). Disk only, American Football simulation. Daily Double Horse Racing (CDS). Horse racing: sm with betting. Converted down from 16-bit machines.

### FRIDAY 22

Shortest day of the year: sun rises at 8.04am, sets at 3.54pm.

### SATURDAY 23

Hanukkah Jewish festival of lights

Is one of the wrapped shapes under the tree remarkably computer-shaped? Has it got your name on the gift tag? If so, go out today and buy the following mugs, small headed screwdriver with a long handle, four way electrical socket, blank disks/tapes. This way you won't have to take the plug off the kettle to set up the computer, or place it somewhere utterly inconvenient just so that you're near the double power point, etc.

### SUNDAY 24

Christmas Eve

### WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

If any games are released this week it

will be an accident. It's turkey on Monday leftovers after that, liqueur chocolates and James Bond movies on TV for everyone this week.

### MONDAY 25

Christmas Day

### TUESDAY 26

Boxing Day (Bank Holiday) St Stephen's Day

### THURSDAY 28

National Day, Nepal. Celebrate with some more turkey.

### FRIDAY 29

Feast Day of St Marcellus the Bloodthirsty, known as the "sleepless monk", because he decreed that hymns should be sung for 24 hours in his monastery. Any record of what the neighbours thought of this has not survived.

### SUNDAY 31

New Year's Eve and the end of the Eighties. Week's releases at a glance.

### JANUARY 1990

New games going into the shops this week are likely to be titles which were intended for pre-Christmas release but didn't make it, due to unprecedented high demand, or, waiting for delivery of manuals, or, late January offered a better window of opportunity - just

weren't finished or debugged in time.

### MONDAY 1

New Year's Day (Bank Holiday). Liberation Day, Cuba. National Day, Haiti. Independence Day, Sudan.

### TUESDAY 2

Bank Holiday in Scotland. Feast Day of St Basil the Great.

### THURSDAY 4

Brave the rush to your newspaper! ACE February issue is out today. International Boal show begins. Independence Day, Burma.

### FRIDAY 5

Feast Day of St Simon the Stylite, famous because he spent the last 36 years of his life living on top of a 60ft pillar.

### SATURDAY 6

Epiphany

### WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Amiga\* Deluxevideo II (Electronic Arts). Animation package with many enhancements over Video II, and complements Deluxepaint II. A hefty £79.99 though. Skate or Die (Electronic Arts). Skateboard simulation converted up from 8-bit. Dragon's Breath (Palace). One to three player strategy trading game developed by team whose members had varying degrees of involvement in

Populous. Space Harrier 2 (Grand Slam). Elite did the original but this is the all-new 1990 version. Wings of Fury (Domark). Aerial combat game licensed from Broderbund, PC.

Indianapolis 500 (Electronic Arts). Fast racing sim (yet another) - based on Indianapolis 500 race, surprisingly enough.

Samurai (Microprose). Alan ST. Skate or Die (Electronic Arts, see above). Starlight (Electronic Arts, see above). The Dual Test Drive II (Accolade). Lagging behind the other versions, this is the Ferrari F40 vs Porsche 959 episode in Accolade's growing Test Drive series. Also coming out now for ST are the accessory disks: California and European Challenge, Sniper Cars and Muscle Cars. C64.

F16 Combat Pilot (Digital Integration). First 8-bit version of one of the 16-bit races of 1989. Flight'n'fight sim.

### SATURDAY 13

Feast Day of St Mary of Perpetua, who gave his name to the Hairy Term in universities and courts of law.

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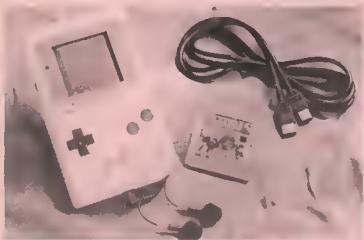
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# WIN A HAND-HELD GAME BOY OR DELUXE NES CONSOLE, COURTSEY OF NINTENDO



## TEN NINTENDO FACTS

- 1 Nintendo of America has approximately 90% share of the US home video game market.
- 2 A 1% share of more than 80 game consoles are on hand for almost 50,000 units per week from Nintendo game stores selling game titles and strategies.
- 3 9.1 million Super Mario Bros. game cartridges have been sold in the US since 1987, 3 million The Legend of Zelda game cartridges have been sold in the US since 1987, and 1.5 million Super Mario Bros. II game cartridges have been sold in the US since March 1988.
- 4 Nintendo celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1988.
- 5 Japanese consumers have purchased nearly 14 million Nintendo hardware units and 145 million software units, earning Nintendo more than 90% market share and greater than 30% penetration of Japanese households.
- 6 Nintendo was the first video game manufacturer to offer software with a programmable function and Playroom-style memory.
- 7 80% of all US families between the ages of 12 and 17 play Nintendo games.
- 8 Nintendo Power, a bi-monthly add-on subscription magazine, has more than 1.2 million subscribers.
- 9 Kluge's US Nintendo fans can look into two different titles: "Tactical manual combinations shaped like favorite Nintendo game characters."
- 10 Every Saturday morning, America's kids can tune into a half-hour Nintendo cartoon featuring their favorite Nintendo game characters.

Launched at CES in Chicago last June, the Nintendo Game Boy is a fully portable video game system which uses interchangeable cartridges and offers multi-player action, monochrome LCD display and digital stereo sound. The Game Boy will be officially launched in the UK at the Earl's Court Toy Fair in January.

With each Game Boy you get the superlative Soviet-sourced Tetris game, stereo earphones and Video Link - an accessory that allows two or more players to connect their Game Boys and compete tournament style among themselves.

In addition to Tetris, there is a large and ever increasing library of Game Boy titles including Super Mario Land, Lode Runner and Tennis.

Although a UK price is yet to be set, the average Game Boy US retail price is \$89.95 with \$19.95 per game cartridge.

The Nintendo NES is the most popular video game system in the world, the Deluxe NES includes control deck, two hand-held controllers, RGB (Robot Operated) Bakkyl Zapper light gun and two game cartridges (Duck Hunt and Super Mario Bros). As well as a huge range of games titles like The Legend of Zelda, Super Mario Bros II and III and Gradius. Japanese Nintendo researchers have developed an exciting range of peripherals which include Powerpad (an interactive electronic mat which allows the player's body movements to control the on-screen action of the characters), Hands Free (a controller which helps the physically disabled enjoy home video game play with the help of a "sip and puff tube"), and a computerised knitting machine.

## GO FOR IT

Winning a Nintendo Game Boy or Deluxe NES could not be simpler, just answer the following questions:

1. When was Nintendo founded?  
(a) 1889 (b) 1967 (c) 1987
2. Which computer, console or coin-op game would you most like to see converted to the Nintendo Game Boy? Why?
3. Finally, tell us which are your TWO favourite articles or sections in this month's AGE, and your TWO least favourite sections. Don't worry - there are no "right answers" for this question. We just want to hear your views, and whatever you say will in no way affect the outcome of the competition.

Please write your answers in BLOCK CAPITALS on the back of a postcard. Don't forget to include your full name, address and telephone number.

Send your completed postcard to:

**AGE NINTENDO COMPETITION,  
Priority Court, 30-32 Farringham Lane,  
London EC3R 8AL**

## THE PRIZES

The Nintendo Game Boy will be awarded to the first entry - or sum of random from the entries received prior to the closing date - giving the correct answer to question (1). The Nintendo Deluxe NES will be awarded to the second correct entry.

### THE RULES

- (1) The closing date for entries is 7th January, 1990.
- (2) Employees of EMAP and Nintendo are not eligible for entry.
- (3) The editors' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

# PREMIER MAIL ORDER

8 Bit New Titles

SEGA SOFTWARE

GAME	PRICE	DISC	CASE	CASS	CRS	DISC
Altairburner	9.98	10.98	9.98	10.98	9.98	10.98
Am City War 1002	4.98	9.98	9.98	10.98	9.98	10.98
Antarctic Ranger	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98
BPS	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98
Amic Fox	2.98	2.98	2.98	2.98	2.98	2.98
Battle Title 2 or 3				12.98		
Belgian Capital Crusader	2.09	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98
Bullwinkle	2.98			14.98		
Blind Valley	2.98			14.98		
Canal Command	9.98	12.98	9.98	12.98	9.98	13.98
Capitaine d'Alor				14.98		
Chuck Yeager			7.50	10.98		7.50
Classic Collections	2.98			2.98		
Crash Cars 2	4.50			9.50		9.50
Crash Master	9.50			9.50		9.50
Curse of Aztec Bands				19.98		
Dragon Ninja	5.00	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98
Earth Ocean Battle				5.98		
Elvin Knight 7202	9.98	9.98	9.98	1.98	9.98	9.98
Fun Fun 2 Exp. 81	5.50	5.50	7.50	1.50	7.50	
Football Decade	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.50		
Football Manager 1	2.98	2.98	2.98	2.98		
Football Manager 2	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	9.98	
Football Manager 3	6.98	7.50	7.42			
Fun School 2 (3-4)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (5-6)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (7-8)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (9-10)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (11-12)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (13-14)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (15-16)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (17-18)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (19-20)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (21-22)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (23-24)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
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Fun School 2 (27-28)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (29-30)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
Fun School 2 (31-32)	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98	7.98	9.98
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# GREAT DEALS!

Christmas is coming and and your friendly local computer dealer is trying all the arts of friendly persuasion to get you into his shop and sell you some nice software. And with offers like this going down are you foolish enough to resist?

## BOOTS UP THE WINNERS

Two for the price of one, maybe your mind is turning towards treating yourself to a compilation this Christmas. If you buy US Gold's Winners package (all formats, contains Thunderblade, Blasteroids, LED Storm, Impossible Mission II, (4-bit only) Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom) from any software department in Boots, you'll find an order form inside the box entitling you to a free Kook game.

Send the form off to US Gold before the end of January and your choice of game will plunk through the letter box a few days later. Amiga and ST owners, be warned: Kook games are 8-bit only. But if US Gold's Moonwalker is on your wants list, stroll

into Boots to buy it, and you'll get a £1 voucher which you can put towards the cost of any Michael Jackson CD, record or tape.

## BAOGEO SOFTWARE

Staying with Michael Jackson and Moonwalker, but moving on to your local W H Smith or John Menzies. No vouchers, but there's a nice fat Michael Jackson badge with every copy of Moonwalker bought in these outlets.

## GOOIES AND GIVEAWAYS IN THE NORTH AND MIOANOS,

The games chain Microbyte seems to be practically giving software away. In a wild display of seasonal goodwill, there are prizes, draws and T-

shirts on a number of major titles. Should you buy Onslaught, The Untouchables, Robocop Ghostbusters II or Hard Drive from Microbyte, don't, whatever you do, forget to pick up your competition entry form. Once filled in, this form will be entered into a Microbyte grand draw.

Prizes are Untouchables and Robocop videos for buyers of those games and £50 software vouchers with Onslaught. First prizes for Hard Drive and Ghostbusters buyers are software vouchers for a massive £200. And Ghostbusters runners-up will get free Origin cinema tickets. Get to the front of the queue and there are further freebies on offer: a free T-shirt or poster when you buy Onslaught, an AI poster to go with

Ghostbusters II, the exclusive Domark goodie bag with Hard Drive, but stocks on all these will be limited.

## HERE WE GO, NERE WE GO

Live in the Liverpool area? Check out your local Bits and Bytes store when buying your US Gold games because there is a big competition going on between the store and USG. It'll be your chance to win a season ticket at either Anfield or Goodison Park, so it's well worth entering.

## VIRGIN VOUCHERS

Christmas always leaves a gaping hole in your wallet, but if you buy your presents from any Virgin outlet (Games Centres, Megastores, whatever) the special Virgin voucher

offer might ease the strain a bit. Buy any product to the value of £10 or more, before Christmas, and you will get a book of vouchers in various denominations, adding up to £5. These can be redeemed any purchases at any Virgin store. Can't be bad.

There are Microbyte stores in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; Goosegate, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham; Kirkcaldy, Wakefield, the Metro Centre, Gateshead the Greenmarket, Newcastle Upon Tyne; the Kirkcaldy Centre, Bradford; the Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham and the County Arcade, Leeds. One of these must be near you! Virgin has its Games Centre outlets on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at no 1001

and Bristol, and also in Megastores in Birmingham, Brighton, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds and Nottingham.

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock. Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers plans.

## ATTENTION DEALERS!

Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else.

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Voucher Number One will give you £20 off either an ST or Amiga. Check the telephone number on the voucher for current prices to which the discount will apply.

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Knaresboro North  
Yorkshire HG5 0SR 100%  
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Bnll, Backs HP18 9RT

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Drive, Birmingham  
Stockport, Cheshire, SH5  
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To celebrate the launch of its new Bruce Lee Lives computer game, Mindscape is generously giving away

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## THE GAME

The master of the martial arts, the lethal legend, the king of kung fu: BRUCE LEE IS BACK! Mindscape/Software Toolworks' latest game, Bruce Lee Lives (reviewed on page 49) "the final martial arts adventure" allows you - through practice and battle - to become Bruce Lee, master of jeet kune do, Bruce's own deadly form of martial arts.

Among the new features found in the game are opponent Artificial Intelligence and a control

macro facility. The unique use of AI tells your enemies memorise your technique and counter attack move-for-move! To win each brutal match, you must constantly alter and rework your fighting method. The programmable macro control facility lets you choreograph any series of fighting moves - punches, jabs, kicks, etc. - and assign them all to one control trigger.

"You don't just play Bruce Lee Lives - you enter it!"

## WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

To win these fabulous Bruce Lee prizes just answer the following questions.

1. Who isn't a movie martial arts star?

(a) Bruce Lee (b) Chuck Norris (c) Gary Williams

Write the answer on the back of a postcard and give us a gameplaying tip on your favourite computer console or coin-op game... Have you found a hidden cheat mode or secret level? Perhaps a

poke for peek performance? How about a well tested tactic to tackle tense times?

Don't forget to include your full name, address, telephone number and computer format.

## Save your entry to:

**BRUCE LEE LIVES!**  
Pink Pages Corporation,  
ACE, Penny Court, 30-32 Farnington Lane,  
London EC1A 3AU.

Closing date for entries is 7th January, 1990. The first correct entry drawn at random from the entries received prior to the closing date will win the videotape and a copy of the game. The next 10 entries drawn will each win a copy of the game.

Please note: employees of EMAP, Mindscape and Software Toolworks are not eligible for entry. The editors' decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.

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# The BLITTER END

## XMAS SILLY SEASON STARTS HERE!

**I**t's been a strange month for the ACE team. Garry Wodger Williams is off the booze, Rick Htman Haynes said he could not stand another drink either, and Jim Who's that girl Wits hasn't made a move on a girl all month! How are they going to cope with the Christmas Party Season? And to top it off, Steve Could't borrow 20p Cooke has disappeared into the Bermuda triangle - and he did not even leave me a Christmas present!

### In-love with Lovecraft?

Did you like the illustration of HP Lovecraft in last month's ACE issue 27, page 37? If the answer is yes, you'd be pleased to know you can get this classy HP Lovecraft Centenary design on T-Shirt Sizes: Large and Extra Large (£7.95), Limited Edition Print (Only 100 copies, signed and numbered by the artist £3.50) or Signed Edition Print (£2). Please make cheques/PO's payable to D.C. Designs (all UK orders post free). Order from Dave Carson, Flat 10, Block J, Peabody Estate, Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2EN. DC Designs also does personalised designs, send SAE with your enquiries.

### Atari Lynx Competition

The closing date for the Atari Lynx competition (further details ACE issue 27, page 121) has been extended to 7th January, 1990.

### ZZZ...ZZZ...ZZZ...

And the award for this month's most boring press release goes to - cue loud bits of snore

### ACE TOP TITLES

#### Laurence

- 1 Interphase • Image Works
- 2 Stormlord • Newscom
- 3 Tetris • Nintendo Gameboy
- 4 Rock n' Roll • Rainbow Arts
- 5 Myth • System 3

#### Rik

- 1 Kick Off • Amco
- 2 Tetris • Nintendo Gameboy
- 3 Battle of Britain • Lucasfilm
- 4 Hard Drive • Domark
- 5 Battle Squadron • Electronic Zoo

#### Steve

- 1 Leisure Suit Larry 3 • Sierra-on-Line

#### Jim

- 1 Crystal Quest • Mac

#### Eugene

- 1 Tetris • Nintendo Gameboy
- 2 Ghouls 'n' Ghosts • Capcom
- 3 Demoloes • Novagen
- 4 Big Run • Jaleco
- 5 X-Multiply • Item

#### Gary

- 1 Tetris • Nintendo Gameboy
- 2 Kick Off • Amco
- 3 Cloud Master • Sega

ing. Amiga Centre Scotland for its Multiport Board press release. I quote: "From CMI, this two serial, one parallel, and optional SCSI port expansion device comes complete with built-in high-speed serial networking support. It features 2 Serial Ports (DB9 RS-232 and 8 pin mm DIN RS-422), 1 DB25 parallel printer port, optional SCSI hard drive interface, and full CMT net AppleTalk compatible hardware. Barry Walsh, development consultant, said 'It dramatically expands the Amiga's I/O capabilities. This opens up so many possibilities for Amiga expansion that we know people have been waiting for'."

Well, I'm sure you agree, it's pretty exciting stuff, eh? But if low level SCSI format supports aren't among your most desired possessions you can always check out next month's ACE for the latest games news, news reviews, previews, interviews and other words that don't end in 'us'. But for now, adieu and have a very merry Christmas.

Blitter

### NEXT MONTH

In the next all action issue of ACE we take an in-depth look at computer football games (including the greatest football game to date. Amco's Kick Off), interview Oscar-winning graphics wizard John Lasseter, talk to The Twits - Domark's twely bosses, give you music maestros the complete buyers guide to MIDI, life and everything else much more.

ACE 29 goes on for sale Thursday 4th January, 1990.

### CRAZY CAPTION COMPETITION

Don't do it Richard, being a millionaire and multi media personality can't be that bad! Whether or not you gun for Richard Branson, you could get your grubby little mitts on a copy of Virgin/Mas tertronic's latest game for your computer. All you have to do is give us a caption for the pic and a games tip for your favourite coin-op, console or computer game. The pic was taken at a recent press party (ACE was there in full force) to launch the Sega Challenge games championships. The winning entry will be chosen by panel of well informed, sensible and extremely unbiased judges - that is to say most of the legat system I here you cry - but fear not because it's a panel of just one, i.e. me! The winner will be the person with either the funniest, most boring or totally insane caption. Send your entries (with attached crisp £5 note!) to: VIRGIN ON THE RIDICULOUS, Blitter End Competition, ACE, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Don't forget the games tip, and include your full name, address and computer model. Entries must reach us by 7th January, 1990.



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